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VOL. 188, NO. 7 | 2016

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What you said about ...

THE RIO OLYMPICS Readers responded passionately to TIME's coverage of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, including our Aug. 8 cover image, featuring gymnast Simone Biles, who was profiled by Alice Park. The athlete seemed "strong, fierce and completely ready to make history," wrote Erin Corbett for the website Bustle. On Instagram, Teresa Karolewicz responded with similar enthusiasm: "I can't even contain my excitement!" Some, however, wished the magazine had devoted more space to some of the challenges of this year's Olympics, including doping charges and fear about the Zika virus: "The Rio Olympics," wrote Robert Harrington of De Pere, Wis., "obviously is a DISASTER."

> 'Impressive photojournalism from TIME. With an outstanding young athlete.'
>
> **LEN SASSENRATH**, on Facebook

THE RETURN OF SUVS Many readers found Justin Worland's Aug. 8 story about the link between sinking gas prices and the return of "gas-guzzling" vehicles upsetting. "Merely reducing emissions is way too little, way too late," wrote David Cantor of Glenside, Pa., who called for rethinking whether cars are even necessary. William Coleman, an electric-car driver from Kirtland, Ohio, noted that "the system does not make it easy" for those who prefer that more eco-friendly option. Meanwhile, Jennifer Karches of Bowling Green, Ohio, said the article focused attention on the wrong problem. If people really want to reduce their carbon footprints, she wrote, they should focus on "the devastating effect animal agriculture has on our planet."

> 'To cut down on the number of SUVs, I would like to see European gas prices here.'
>
> **FREDERICK BUHL**, Brooklyn

NIGHT VISION Taking photos in pitch black can be tricky, but photographer Stuart Palley has mastered the art. "Ninety percent of it is preparation," he says, "and 10% of it is the actual execution." He shares his tips in a new TIME video. Watch it at **lightbox.time.com**

BONUS *TIME* HEALTH

Subscribe to TIME's health newsletter and get a **weekly email full of news and advice to keep you well.** For more, visit **time.com/email**

OLYMPIC DIET What does it take to fuel an Olympian? As part of TIME's ongoing coverage of Rio 2016, we looked at the diets of athletes like U.S. rower Seth Weil (whose single-day food haul is represented above). Throughout the games, writers Alice Park and Sean Gregory will be reporting on the ground from Brazil, providing exclusive interviews with top athletes and quick analyses of the most exciting competitions. For full coverage, check out **time.com/olympics**

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NIGHT VISION: STUART PALLEY; OLYMPIC DIET: STEPHANIE GONOT FOR TIME

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'It's O.K. to sing, and it's O.K. to cry.'

MICHAEL PHELPS, the most decorated Olympian of all time, telling his teammates how to act during medal ceremonies

$89,000

Estimated value of an ice cream truck purchased by the Boston Police Foundation; it will be used by local cops to build goodwill with the community

SUICIDE SQUAD opened to nearly $135 million at the U.S. box office despite a lackluster critics' score on Rotten Tomatoes (26% positive). It's the latest superhero flick whose first-weekend haul bucked bad reviews:

$133,682,248
Suicide Squad
(26% rating)

$166,007,347
Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice
(27%)

$65,769,562
X-Men: Apocalypse
(48%)

'I GET SO TIRED OF TALKING ABOUT DIVERSITY.'

KENYA BARRIS, creator of ABC's Emmy-nominated comedy *black-ish,* saying people who focus solely on the race of the show's cast members are missing the point

Skateboarding
Officials said the sport will be included in the 2020 Olympics

GOOD WEEK
BAD WEEK

Hoverboarding
A New Jersey store selling the devices caught fire

'NONE OF US WILL VOTE FOR DONALD TRUMP.'

50 TOP GOP NATIONAL-SECURITY OFFICIALS—including former CIA Director Michael Hayden, erstwhile Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte and two ex–Secretaries of Homeland Security—in a statement condemning the Republican presidential candidate as a "dangerous" man who "would put at risk our country's national security and well-being"

'We have to heal our city.'

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Baltimore mayor, after a Department of Justice study concluded that the city's police department regularly violated citizens' constitutional rights and that its relationship with the community was "broken"

'WE, THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES, DECIDED TO BE UNITED AND ACT AS UNITED.'

ANAS AL-ABDAH, leader of Syria's main opposition group, the Syrian Coalition, after the rebels successfully broke a government siege on the Syrian city of Aleppo

SOURCES: NEW YORK TIMES, VARIETY, WALL STREET JOURNAL

PHELPS, BARRIS, RAWLINGS-BLAKE: GETTY IMAGES; SUICIDE SQUAD, BATMAN V SUPERMAN: WARNER BROS.; X-MEN: 20TH CENTURY FOX; ILLUSTRATION BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN FOR TIME

The Brief

'ERDOGAN WILL IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA AND CHINA—IF ONLY TO SHOW HE CAN MAKE WESTERN CRITICS SWEAT.' —PAGE 12

Debris fills the air as Syrian rebel forces blow up a tunnel beneath a regime base on Aug. 3

ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

MIDDLE EAST

A stunning rebel push in Aleppo resets Syria's endless civil war

By Jared Malsin

THE CITY AT THE HEART OF SYRIA'S civil war saw a dramatic reversal of fortune in recent days as rebel fighters in Aleppo made a daring advance against forces loyal to the regime of President Bashar Assad. Opposition fighters reported that they had punched through pro-regime lines on Aug. 6, finally breaking a weeks-long government siege on the eastern half of the city that is held by the opposition and at the same time surrounding the regime-held western side of the city.

The breakthrough has raised morale among the rebels and their civilian supporters, but it only serves to deepen the humanitarian crisis that has enveloped an already devastated city. The corridor created by the advance is tenuous at best, and no sustained supply route to the rest of rebel-held Syria has been established. The shift on the battlefield now threatens to place both east and west Aleppo under effective siege, by separate sides in the conflict. The U.N. humanitarian chiefs for Syria, Yacoub El Hillo and Kevin Kennedy, said in a statement that over 2 million Syrians now live in "de facto fear of besiegement." Aleppo is "a city now united in its suffering."

Still, the opposition offensive there represents a rebuke to the Assad regime and its allies, who consider the city the backbone of the armed insurrection that sprang out of a popular uprising in 2011. Assad's forces are backed by troops from Iran and the Lebanese militant group Hizballah and have been bolstered since September 2015 by Russian airpower. Only weeks earlier, the opposition faced the total

PHOTOGRAPH BY MUHAMMED SHEEKH

encirclement of eastern Aleppo. Similar sieges imposed by the regime elsewhere in Syria have resulted in starvation and mass death.

The reversal of fortune has come just as the balance of power within Aleppo rebel groups has swung toward Islamist hard-liners, complicating matters for Western powers that seek Assad's removal. The coalition of opposition groups that came together to fight the siege of eastern Aleppo in July included the jihadist fighters of Jabhat Fateh al-Sham. Formerly known as Jabhat al-Nusra, the newly renamed group had been allied with al-Qaeda but declared a split in July. It now fights with more mainstream Islamist groups and battalions from the Free Syrian Army, a rebel umbrella group that includes Western-supported forces.

The increasingly prominent role of Islamist hard-liners unnerves many moderate Syrian opposition activists. Mainstream Syrian rebel groups, which say the U.S. and other Western supporters have failed to offer them enough aid to turn the tide of the war, have lost influence. That has left the door open for jihadists to score a significant victory with the some 300,000 people who live in the rebel sector of Aleppo. "People here are looking for anyone to break the siege," says Mahmoud Rashwani, an activist in rebel-held eastern Aleppo.

The shift should worry Washington too, says Robert S. Ford, a former U.S. ambassador to Syria who is a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute in Washington. "The United States did nothing to help break that siege, at least nothing that anyone could point to," he says. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry tried to negotiate a cease-fire with Russia that might have lifted the siege on eastern Aleppo, but the talks failed. "The end result is American credibility suffers a blow," Ford says, while "the credibility of extremists that we don't like in Fateh al-Sham goes up, and the Americans ultimately are in control of nothing."

As always, it is the civilians in Aleppo who pay the price. Two million people in the city lack access to running water, according to the U.N. Children's Fund. Airstrikes continue to devastate the medical infrastructure in rebel-held areas. In Aleppo alone, there were at least 15 attacks on medical facilities or personnel in July, according to the Syrian American Medical Society, which says a tiny core of 35 doctors have been left to serve hundreds of thousands of civilians. "It's very clear it's systematic," says Dr. Mohamad Katoub, a spokesman for the group. "We are trying to avoid working in hospitals that don't have good fortification."

The rebels have made clear they will not go quietly into the night, but their resistance will almost surely be met by a ferocious reaction from the pro-regime side. For the long-suffering people of Aleppo caught in between, there is no end in sight. □

TRENDING

ACCIDENTS
The 10-year-old son of a Kansas lawmaker **died riding a 168-ft. waterslide** billed as the world's tallest, at Schlitterbahn Waterpark in Kansas City on Aug. 7. Police say Caleb Schwab suffered a fatal neck injury but were still investigating the cause as of Aug. 9.

TERRORISM
A targeted suicide bombing at a hospital in Quetta, Pakistan, killed at least 74, **most of them lawyers mourning a murdered colleague.** A Taliban splinter group and ISIS each claimed responsibility for the assault in the provincial capital.

IMMIGRATION
A Chinese tourist who spoke only Mandarin **spent close to two weeks in a German refugee shelter** after mistakenly filling out an asylum application when he tried to report a stolen wallet. Authorities released him on July 20 with the help of a local Chinese restaurant worker.

ROYALS

Japan's Emperor hints at an early exit

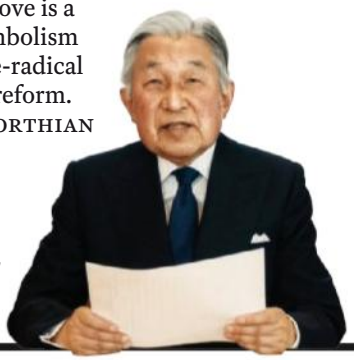
EMPEROR AKIHITO OF JAPAN suggested in a televised speech on Aug. 8 he might be ready to abdicate the throne because of old age and declining health. Here's why it's causing waves:

LEGAL HURDLES Imperial law requires the Emperor to rule until death, so the Japanese parliament would have to alter the postwar constitution for the 82-year-old to quit, a move likely to be resented by conservatives. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said his government would "think hard" about next steps.

LINEAGE DEBATE Any attempt to modernize or alter imperial law would likely rekindle a long-running debate in Japan on a line of succession that recognizes only male heirs. Crown Prince Naruhito has a teenage daughter unable to take the throne; instead his brother and 9-year-old nephew are next in line.

POLITICAL MEANING The Emperor is forbidden to meddle in politics, but his statement comes as Abe considers a revision to the constitution that would move Japan away from pacifism. Some say Akihito's move is a quiet act of symbolism to oppose more-radical constitutional reform.

—JULIA ZORTHIAN



Emperor Akihito said his "fitness level is gradually declining"

FOOD

Cheap Michelin-starred eats

Since being introduced in 1926, Michelin stars have been considered a coveted accolade linked to expensive fine dining. In recent years, however, the Michelin reviewers have rewarded some budget-friendly outlets, the latest being a Singaporean street food vendor on July 21. Here, some of the cheapest dishes at Michelin-starred eateries:

DIGITS

15 years, 9 months, 7 days

Length of a hunger strike by activist Irom Sharmila of India in protest of a law giving the military sweeping powers. After being fed through a nasal tube, she ended the strike on Aug. 9 with a lick of honey off her palm

CHEMICAL WEAPON Groundskeeper Fran Middlebrooks sprays pesticide in Pinecrest Gardens in Miami on Aug. 4 after new Zika infections caused by local mosquitoes were reported in the area. The Miami outbreak, which has infected at least 21 people since it was first detected on July 4, is the first time the virus has been spread by mosquitoes in the continental U.S. *Photograph by Gaston De Cardenas—Miami Herald/abacapress*

ACCIDENTS: EPA; TERRORISM: IMMIGRATION, SHARMILA: GETTY IMAGES; AKIHITO: AP; SINGAPORE: LUCAS LIM; JAPAN: BRIAN MACDUCKSTON; BRAZIL: ILANA LICHTENSTEIN; U.K.: LIMA

HK Soya Sauce Chicken Rice & Noodle
SINGAPORE

The hawker stall's **chicken rice** made history by becoming one of the cheapest meals served by a Michelin-starred outlet.

$1.85

Tsuta
JAPAN

In 2015, the Tokyo eatery became the first ramen joint to win a Michelin star, serving simple dishes like **shoyu ramen.**

$9.80

Tuju
BRAZIL

The São Paulo restaurant's **three-course lunch menu** features contemporary Brazilian dishes like jabuticaba consommé.

$23.67

Lima
U.K.

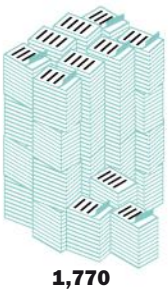
This London restaurant's Peruvian cooking won it a 2014 Michelin star. Ceviche dish tuna *tiradito* is on its **two-course menu.**

$30.03

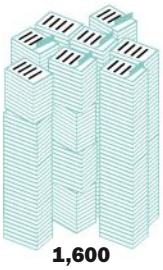
DATA

SEEKING SANCTUARY

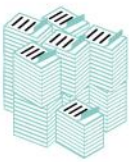
A record 1.3 million migrants applied for asylum in the E.U. in 2015, according to analysis by Pew. Here's the number of first-time asylum applications per 100,000 people in a sampling of E.U. nations:



1,770
Hungary



1,600
Sweden



540
Germany

100
Greece

60
U.K.

TRENDING

PUBLIC HEALTH

Some 16.5 million Americans may be **drinking water containing chemicals linked to high cholesterol, obesity and cancer.** A study found that samples from public water supplies in 33 states contained unsafe levels of organic compounds known as PFAS.

ESPIONAGE

An Iranian nuclear scientist accused of spying for the U.S. **has been executed,** an Iranian official said on Aug. 7. Shahram Amiri disappeared from Iran in 2009 and turned up in the U.S. in June 2010. He claimed the CIA had kidnapped him, but Iran jailed him upon his return.

AIRLINES

About 2,000 Delta flights were **canceled worldwide over at least three days** due to a computer glitch caused by a power outage at the airline's Atlanta headquarters on Aug. 8. Stranded passengers were offered refunds and $200 travel vouchers.

THE RISK REPORT

Turkey and Russia get closer—and worry the West

By Ian Bremmer

LAST NOVEMBER, TURKEY SHOT DOWN A Russian fighter jet near the country's border with Syria, provoking fears in Western capitals that Ankara and Moscow might stumble into conflict. Russia then imposed sanctions that badly damaged Turkey's economy, and a chastened President Recep Tayyip Erdogan apologized in June. In July, Erdogan faced down a coup attempt; his subsequent detention of tens of thousands of suspected enemies has drawn sharp criticism from his U.S. and European NATO allies. On Aug. 9, he made headlines by flying to Russia for his first meeting with Vladimir Putin since the plane fiasco, and the West now fears that Turkey and Russia are moving too close together.

We live in fast-moving times.

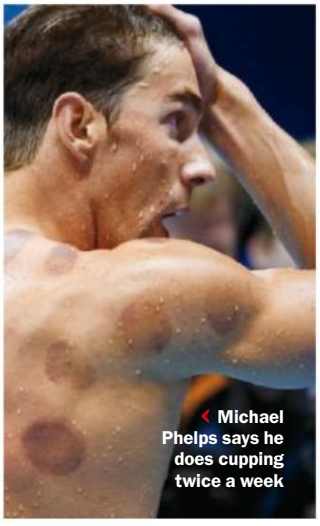
The two Presidents feel a common grievance toward the West. Putin has accused U.S. and European leaders of violating agreements by expanding NATO to Russia's borders and fomenting unrest in nearby Georgia and Ukraine. Pro-government Turkish newspapers have accused the U.S. of orchestrating the coup, and Erdogan has angrily rejected European criticism of his response to it.

Putin expressed support for Erdogan's government during the coup's early hours and has remained silent as Erdogan jails those his government accuses of treachery. The West, by contrast, was slow to support Erdogan that night and has sharply criticized his crackdown. (Turkey's government has reportedly detained the Turkish pilots who shot down the Russian aircraft on suspicion of involvement in the coup attempt.)

Following their meeting, both men will get some things they want. Putin will raise doubts within NATO about member state Turkey's reliability and gain a freer hand to extend Russia's naval capabilities in the Black Sea. He might also get a softer Turkish attitude toward both Russia's treatment of Crimean Tatars in Ukraine and toward Syria's Bashar Assad, a man Putin considers an ally and Erdogan has denounced as an enemy. Erdogan will get an easing of Putin's sanctions, helping Turkey restore food exports to Russia and welcome more Russian tourists. The two leaders will move forward on stalled energy projects that can profit both sides.

The U.S. and Europe will watch carefully to see just how far better relations might go. Will Turkey continue its push for full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a China- and Russia-led alliance that NATO fears might one day become a military bloc? Erdogan has edged in that direction for years. It's hard to imagine a better way of thumbing his nose at the West.

But there's a limit to how far this might go. Erdogan won't withdraw from NATO, and he isn't likely to cut ties with the U.S. But he will improve relations with Russia and China where he can—if only to show he can make Western critics sweat. ◻



Michael Phelps says he does cupping twice a week

SPORTS

A beginner's guide to cupping

An ancient Chinese therapy is center stage this Olympics after a handful of American swimmers were spotted (literally) with dark, round marks on their bodies. Here's what to know about cupping. *—Alexandra Sifferlin*

HOW IT WORKS

Administrators place special suction cups on a subject's body, which pull skin and blood vessels away from the muscles (hence the dark marks). It's meant to improve circulation and loosen up tissue, muscles and joints.

WHY IT'S TRENDY (AGAIN)

Swimmers say cupping helps prevent soreness, promote faster recovery and/or make muscles move more easily. In traditional Chinese medicine, it's thought to help improve the body's chi, or energy flow.

WHAT SCIENCE SAYS

A 2010 review of 550 clinical studies found evidence that cupping may help ease pain without any serious side effects. Some question whether there's enough data to prove that it is definitely effective.

PUBLIC HEALTH, AIRLINES: GETTY IMAGES; ESPIONAGE, SPORTS: REUTERS

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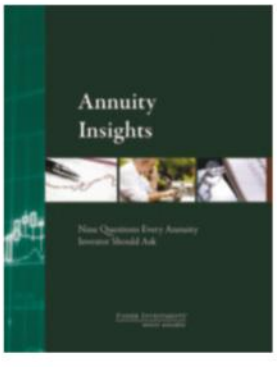

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Local Walmarts, like this one in Largo, Fla., are trying to reduce police calls for low-level offenses

CRIME

Walmart's DIY plan to fight petty theft

By Josh Sanburn

THE WALMART SUPERCENTER IN CAMDEN, S.C., is a 24/7 retail oasis and the only place many nearby residents can go for basic necessities. It's also the most frequented stop for local police. In the first six months of 2016, 14% of the city's law-enforcement reports originated there, most for shoplifting—a figure that would be even higher if Walmart called the cops for every trespass and minor theft, says police chief Joe Floyd.

This holds true across the U.S. In four Florida counties surrounding Tampa, police were called to local Walmarts 16,800 times in 2014, according to the Tampa Bay *Times*. In Louisville, Ky., WDRB reports that there have been more than 9,200 calls to local Walmarts since 2012, more than any other retail chain (or location) in the city. For some departments, the sheer number of low-level offenses reported to police—theft being the most common—has pulled officers away from investigating more serious incidents.

To ease that burden and reduce shoplifting losses, America's largest retailer is starting to do police work. Earlier this summer, Walmart hired an additional 9,000 employees to guard its doors and check receipts. As part of a program called Restorative Justice, they will work alongside existing employees to manage some petty crimes internally. If an employee, for instance, catches a thief whose name is not in a searchable police database—that is, a first-time offender—that person will get a choice: pay to take an online course about the consequences of their actions, or face charges. The idea, says Walmart spokesman Brian Nick, is to rehabilitate lawbreakers without involving the police. Similar programs exist in schools and prisons.

But the efforts have raised concerns. For one, it's unclear if the online courses are as helpful as they seem, given that one of the entities hired to administer them—Corrective Education Company (CEC)—is being sued for overcharging and even falsely imprisoning alleged shoplifters. (In a statement, CEC CEO Brian Ashton called the lawsuit "without merit"; Nick declined to comment.) And even with extra staff, Walmart's sprawling stores will remain difficult to secure because of their size and accessibility, especially during late-night hours, when fewer employees are working. "It's a major public area," says Camden's Floyd.

Still, there are signs that Restorative Justice could work. The Arlington police department in Texas, for example, says the program reduced police calls to local Walmart stores by 40.5% from last October through July. But something truly transformational will likely take years—and more police runs in the meantime. □

16,800
Number of police calls to local Walmarts in Tampa in 2014, mostly for theft

9,000
Number of new employees hired by Walmart to help manage petty crime

Milestones

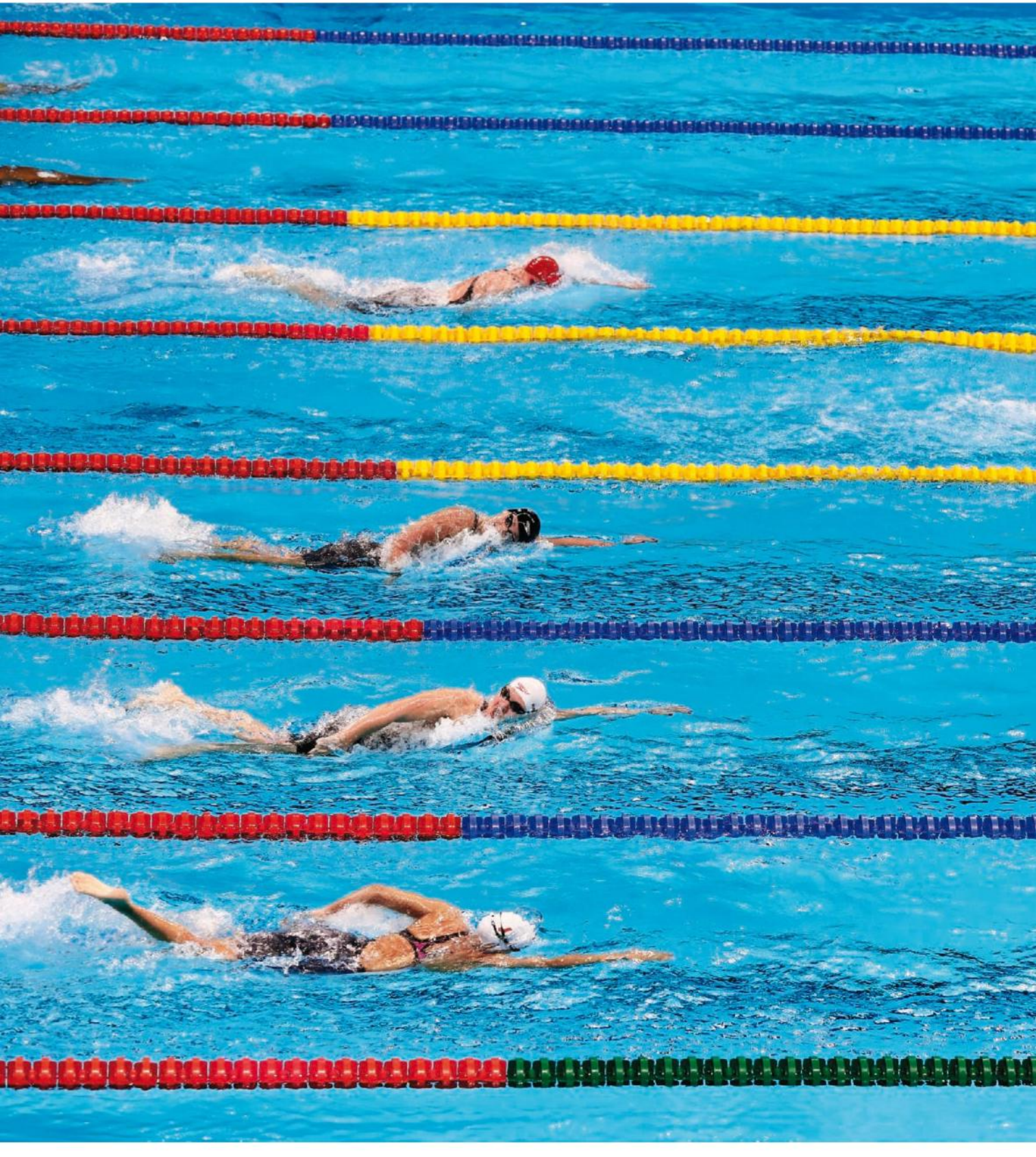
ANNOUNCED
By Alex Rodriguez, designated hitter for the New York Yankees, **his retirement from playing professional baseball.** A-Rod will play his last game for the team on Aug. 12 but will serve as a "special adviser and instructor" to the Yankees until Dec. 31, 2017. In his 22-year career, Rodriguez hit 696 home runs—the fourth most in MLB history—and won three Most Valuable Player awards and a 2009 World Series title. The slugger was suspended for the entire 2014 season for taking performance-enhancing drugs.

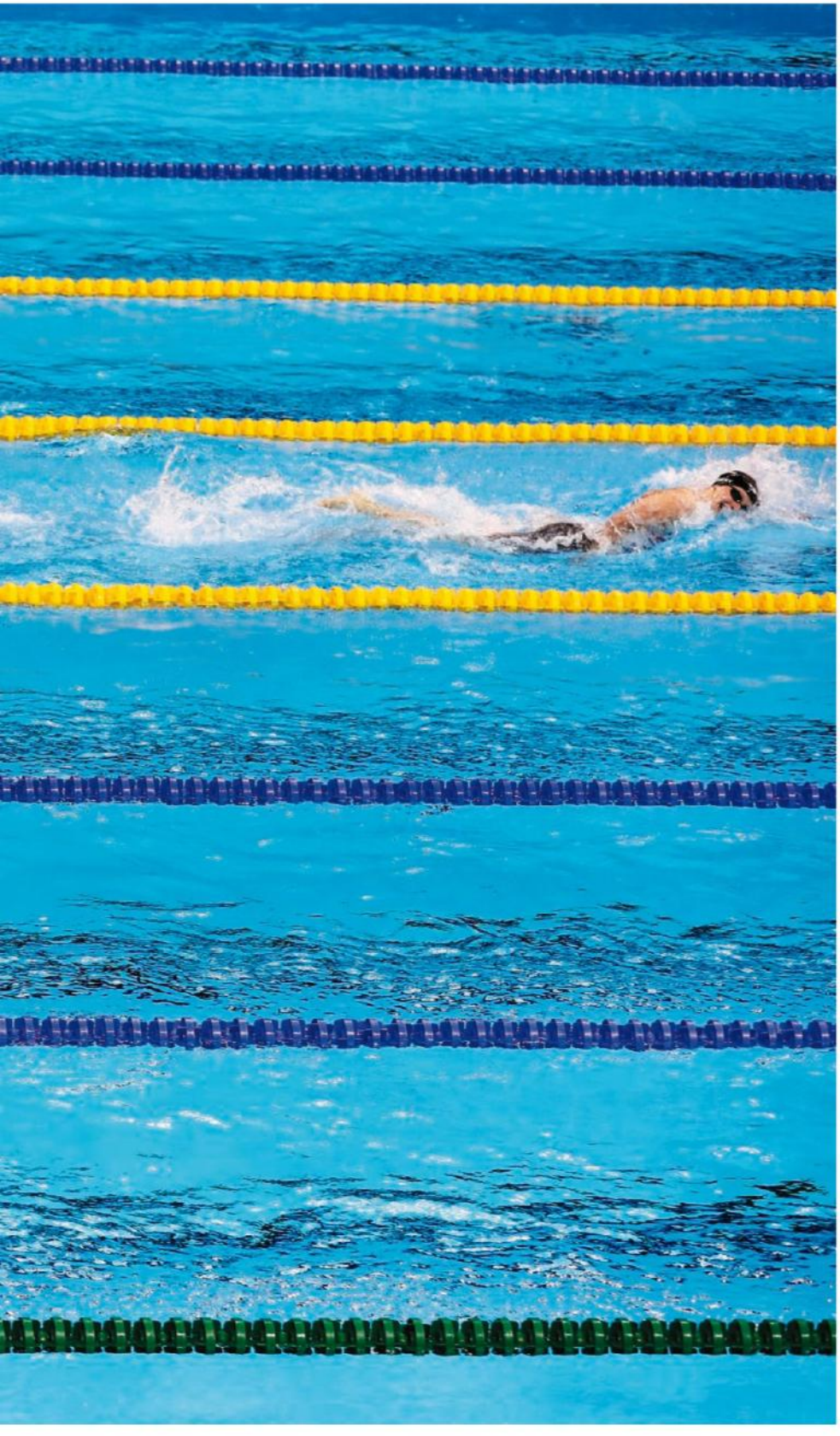
Rodriguez

DISCOVERED
Solid evidence that **prehumans used tools to butcher and eat animals about 250,000 years ago,** according to a study published in the *Journal of Archaeological Sciences*. Animal blood was detected on 17 of 44 tools believed to have been used by our ancestors in northeast Jordan and tested by a team of researchers led by April Nowell of the University of Victoria in Canada.

COMPLETED
The **$115 million transfer** of soccer star Paul Pogba back to Manchester United from the Italian club Juventus. The five-year contract is believed to be the biggest such fee ever agreed on and comes four years after the French midfielder joined Juventus from the English club on a free transfer.

WALMART: JIM DAMASKE—TAMPA BAY TIMES/ZUMA; RODRIGUEZ: GETTY IMAGES





OLYMPICS

Records fall and stars rise in Rio

THE WATCHWORD LEADING UP TO the 2016 Summer Olympics was *danger:* a Zika epidemic, infested waterways, political and economic crises, and a soaring crime rate all cast a pall over Rio de Janeiro's long-planned global party. But then the games actually began at the Games, and the spectacular feats of strength, talent and will reminded us of why we're captivated anew every four years.

In the pool, the U.S. minted stars in gold medalist Lilly King, who struck a blow for clean athletes everywhere, and the spectacular Katie Ledecky, the 19-year-old from Maryland who demolished rivals on her way to multiple golds. And it burnished icons like Michael Phelps, who has turned Rio into a record-setting redemption tour. Behind the gravity-defying Simone Biles, the U.S. women won their second straight team gymnastics gold. Another barrier fell when fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad became the first American to compete in a hijab. And the host country erupted when judoka Rafaela Silva won Brazil's first gold in an arena just five miles from the favela where she was born.

Beyond the gilded TV drama, however, the fissures show. Protesters have been removed from events. Machine-gun-toting troops patrol the main sites, but street crime remains ever present. And the venues have been plagued by long lines and food and water shortages. Whether these Games leave Rio in a better place will be clear only after the world moves on. In the meantime, marvel at the heartbreak and triumph that only the Olympics can provide.

—SEAN GREGORY/RIO DE JANEIRO

U.S. swimmer Katie Ledecky outpaces the field on her way to gold—and a new world record—in the 400-m freestyle in Rio on Aug. 7

PHOTOGRAPH BY AL BELLO—GETTY IMAGES

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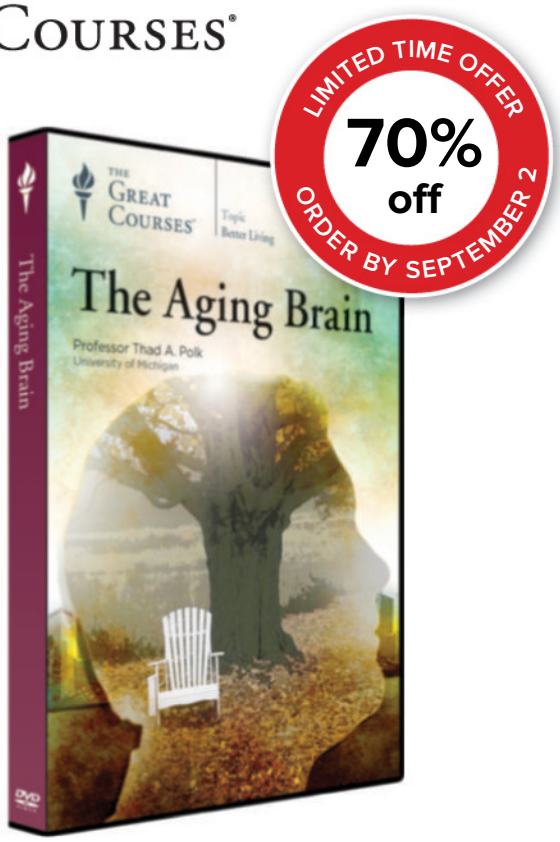

Learn How to Keep Your Mind Healthy

Growing older may be inevitable, but there is much you can do to fight senility. By studying communities where people tend to live exceptionally long lives, using brain scanning technologies such as fMRIs, and conducting longitudinal studies of the population, researchers have uncovered a wealth of information about staying healthy and keeping your mind sharp.

Taught by Professor Thad Polk, a neuroscientist and award-winning professor at the University of Michigan, these twelve eye-opening lectures will give you new insights into what happens to the brain over time—as well as strategies to mitigate the effects of aging and enhance your quality of life into old age. Mixing scientific research and practical applications, Professor Polk brings cutting-edge science to life. He takes you down to the cellular and even molecular level of the brain to teach you what you can do to prolong your health and keep your mental edge. Aging affects us all, but as you will learn in **The Aging Brain**, you have some control over how it affects you.

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The View

'WHAT IF I KNEW MY DAUGHTER CARRIED A "SMART" GENE AND MY SON DID NOT?' —PAGE 22

This spring, Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport had massive security-line delays; it's seen improvement under a new system that is now being tested

AP

TRAVEL

How airports are fixing security chaos

By Alex Fitzpatrick

ON A RECENT SUMMER MORNING, I arrive at an airport security checkpoint expecting the worst. The wait will be interminable. The agents will be overworked. The line will get stalled, over and over again, because someone forgot to remove a belt, or help a child, or empty a water bottle, or all of the above.

But here at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International, the busiest airport in the world, something is different. Each conveyor belt has five loading stations instead of the usual one, so people can move at their own pace without holding up the line. When items get flagged for review, they're whisked to a separate area, so other stuff can pass through. At the checkpoint exit, travelers place their empty bins on the belt, which takes them back to the entrance, automating a task typically done by workers.

Throughout the process, which is already popular in Europe, my line moves quickly and smoothly. And apparently I'm not alone. Early reports indicate line efficiency—the speed at which travelers move through security—is up 30% since the system was put in effect a few months ago. It will soon be tested in Los Angeles, Chicago and Miami.

This is not the narrative we're used to hearing about American airports. Data from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), analyzed by TIME, reveals that the frequency of extensive line delays neared a nine-year high in the spring, driven by a mix of more travelers (because airfares were low) and fewer agents (because

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID GOLDMAN

the TSA overestimated how many people would use its PreCheck program). The chaos peaked in May, when the TSA replaced its head of security amid national outrage and calls for reform.

It was—and is—an issue of both convenience and safety: long lines, where large numbers of people congregate before they're screened, can be vulnerable targets for attacks like the one at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport. "We have to get [more] people out of their cars, through security and into the interior part of the airport, which is the safest part," says Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, who helps oversee Hartsfield-Jackson.

That's exactly what a growing number of U.S. airports are doing right now, with impressive results. According to TSA data, the frequency of extensive line delays—times when it took travelers longer than 20 minutes to get through security—decreased 74% from May to June, returning to levels not seen since last fall.

Why the sudden shift? In part, it's because Congress came to the rescue, adjusting the TSA budget to allow for extra screeners and more overtime pay. But the air-travel industry is also changing from within. After years as bystanders, airlines—which have benefited from low oil prices—are investing in better security, especially at their hubs. (The Hartsfield-Jackson refresh was funded by a $1 million grant from Atlanta-based Delta.) Meanwhile, airports—which now have unprecedented access to data and technology—are experimenting with their own solutions. Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International, for example, is testing a system that tracks people's smartphones as they move through security and posts current wait times on nearby screens and a website. And 22 airports, including Orlando's Sanford International, have replaced their TSA screeners with a privatized force (though the TSA still has some oversight). Diane Crews, Sanford's president and CEO, says she had bad personal travel experiences with the TSA and doesn't want things like that "to ever happen at my airport."

Because there's no conclusive data comparing privatized airport-security systems with non-privatized ones and because many other efforts got under way only recently, it's hard to tell which fixes are working best—or at all. Some, like increasing overtime hours for TSA agents, may produce only short-term gains. Others, like the Atlanta system, are likely too expensive for airports that don't have airline partners footing the bill. (American and United are paying to bring it to other cities.)

Combined, however, these changes appear to be making a difference. And in the messy, complex world of airport security, even embryonic progress is pretty fly. —*With additional reporting by* EMILY BARONE

VERBATIM

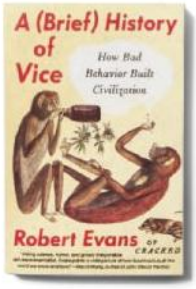
'It is absolutely men's responsibility to fight sexism too. And as spouses and partners and boyfriends, we need to work hard and be deliberate about creating truly equal relationships.'

PRESIDENT OBAMA, in an essay for *Glamour* about being a feminist

BOOK IN BRIEF

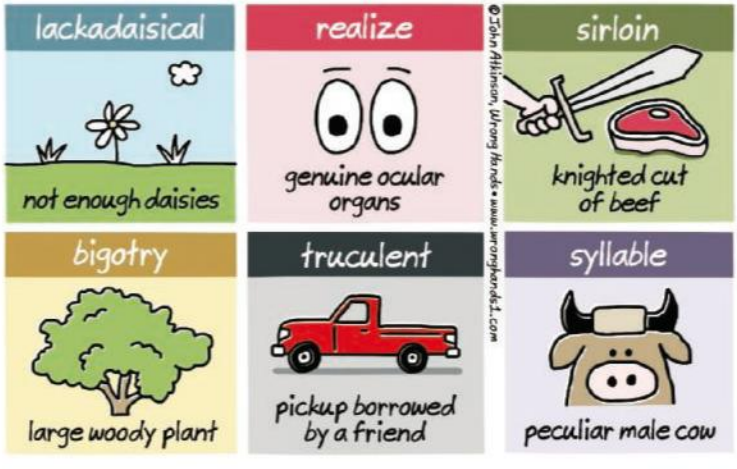
The upside of 'bad' behavior

AMERICANS TEND TO THINK OF VICES as, well, vices: shameful habits to avoid. But throughout history, such behaviors have played a critical role in shaping societies, sometimes for the better. So argues Cracked editor Robert Evans in *A (Brief) History of Vice: How Bad Behavior Built Civilization.* A desire to drink and party, for example, led early nomadic humans to establish more-permanent roots in farming communities, where they could produce more beer and hold social gatherings—which ultimately helped them develop a more complex, sophisticated culture. And during the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, a spike in kinky interests—like foot fetishes—meant more people were satisfying their sexual desires without risking (or spreading) infection. "Behind every vice is an impulse," Evans writes. And while impulses can be destructive, they can also be used to "improve our ability to deal with the world, and … help us grow as people." —SARAH BEGLEY



CHARTOON

Phonetically defined

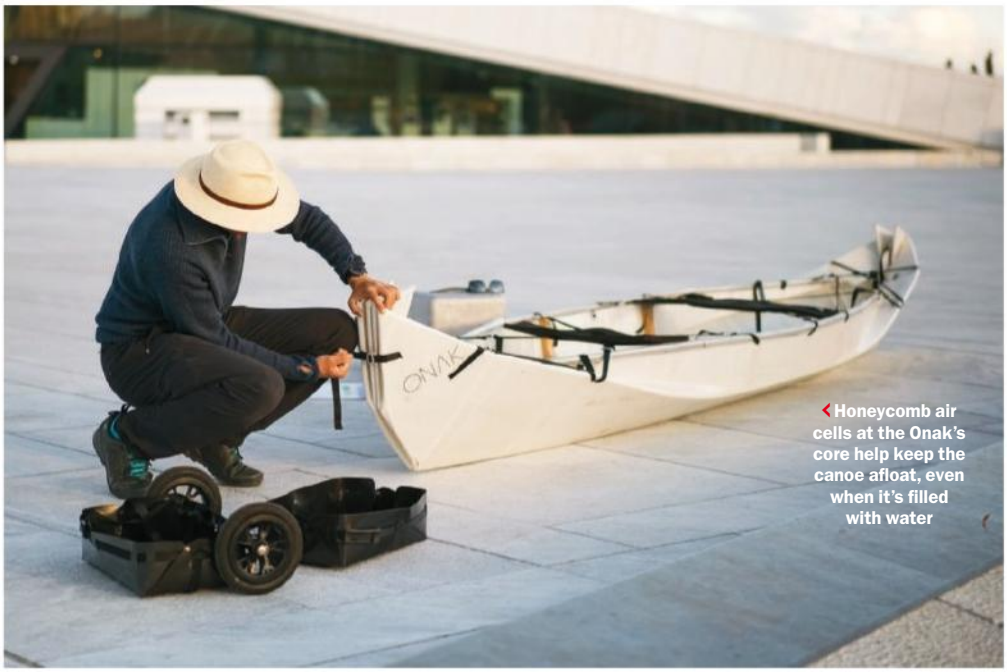


JOHN ATKINSON, WRONG HANDS

BIG IDEA

The origami canoe

For city dwellers, owning a bulky canoe is a logistical nightmare. That's why Belgium-based paddling enthusiasts Otto Van De Steene and Thomas Weyn created the Onak, a full-size vessel that can be unfolded from the form of a rolling suitcase in roughly 10 minutes. At 37 lb. (17 kg), it's light enough to lug up a staircase. But it's made of a multilayer composite plastic that's strong enough to crack through an inch of ice. The first batch of the Kickstarter-funded canoes should be delivered by March 2017, and Van De Steene says he and Weyn have plans to push the "origami and waterproof" concept even further. *—Julia Zorthian*



Honeycomb air cells at the Onak's core help keep the canoe afloat, even when it's filled with water

SPOTLIGHT

Why more Americans are choosing cremation

FOR DECADES, THE AMERICAN WAY OF death has been the same: embalmed bodies, engraved tombstones, graveside ceremonies and, finally, burials. Not so anymore. According to state-by-state data compiled by the Cremation Association of North America and the National Funeral Directors Association, cremation is the new custom, accounting for almost 49% of all dispositions last year, vs. 45% for burials—"a seismic shift," says Barbara Kemmis, CANA's executive director.

Although cremation's popularity has steadily grown for years (thanks in part to increasing acceptance by organized religions), the biggest reason for its newfound dominance is cost. Burials are complex affairs that require a plot, a tombstone and a coffin—which all told can cost thousands of dollars. Cremations, by contrast, are simple and cheap. They're also seen as a more flexible option for Americans, who are increasingly mobile and may live and die far from home—and their family plots.

The growth of cremation is shaking up the $16 billion death industry; it's one of the reasons the number of funeral homes has fallen almost 10% since 2005. Now, alongside caskets and grave plots, many funeral directors sell personalized urns and spots in cremation gardens, which tend to cost a fraction as much. "Funeral directors are starting to see that cremation is not going anywhere," says Mike Nicodemus, the NFDA's vice president of cremation services. Indeed, the NFDA projects that by 2030, cremation rates will top 70% nationwide, a complete reversal with burials in roughly 30 years. —JOSH SANBURN

DATA

THIS JUST IN

A roundup of new and noteworthy insights from the week's most talked-about studies:

1

MILLENNIALS ARE HAVING LESS SEX THAN OTHER GENERATIONS

A study published in the *Archives of Sexual Behavior* found that millennials born in the 1990s were at least twice as likely to be sexually inactive as Gen X-ers were when they were in their early 20s. Experts have suggested it's because younger women feel more empowered to say no and because younger people in general find it harder to make deep romantic connections.

2

VOLUNTEERING IS GOOD FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

A report published in the journal *BMJ Open* found that people who volunteered had higher levels of mental health and well-being than those who did not. This was especially true for people over 40.

3

NATURE SCENES MIGHT MAKE PRISONERS LESS VIOLENT

A study presented at the 12th annual American Psychological Association convention found that inmates who were shown videos of sights like forests and rivers had 26% fewer violent infractions than inmates who did not watch the videos.

CANOE: ONAK; OBAMA: GETTY IMAGES

Pandora's baby: the new science of predicting your child

By Emily Oster

I HAVE TWO CHILDREN. AT THE MOMENT, ALL I KNOW ABOUT their genes is that they both have 46 chromosomes, and one is XY and one is XX.

I try to treat them equally, to assume equal potential. But what if I knew my daughter carried a "smart" gene and my son did not? When he came home from school with a B, would I assume it was because of his genes and not push him to try harder? And what if I could have known this before he were born, at a time when he was just a little blip on an ultrasound? Frankly, I'm not sure I would trust myself with that information.

Such knowledge, of course, isn't possible yet. For one thing, we haven't found many genes that can reliably predict intelligence. And at the moment, even if we did know what genes we were looking for, we wouldn't be able to find them very early in pregnancy. But thanks to a new kind of prenatal genetic testing, this may be starting to change.

Once upon a time, everything about your baby was a surprise until the moment of birth. Is it a boy or girl? Does he (or she!) have all 10 fingers and 10 toes? And most important: Is the baby healthy? Genetic disorders—Down syndrome, trisomy 18 and others—were often a surprise in the delivery room.

> The fact that we can determine characteristics of a baby in utero, combined with the availability of abortion, has always made some people nervous

We may still engage in the ritual counting of fingers and toes on a new baby, but it's all for show: really, we checked for those months ago with an ultrasound. And for many women, genetic testing during pregnancy has ruled out—or all but ruled out—the possibility that their child has a genetic abnormality.

Recently, the introduction of "cell-free fetal DNA testing" has altered the landscape of prenatal genetic testing even further. You may have heard of these tests by their brand names: Harmony or MateniT21, among others. The technology for each is broadly the same: they rely on a sample of maternal blood, and they have accuracy rates approaching those of a fetal diagnostic test like amniocentesis or chorionic villus sampling (CVS), but without any risk to the fetus. In other words, these new tests provide the best of both worlds—and a recipe for moral fission.

Prenatal genetic testing, imperfect though it has been, is not new. Rising to popularity in the 1960s, amniocentesis allowed doctors to identify genetic disorders in utero, typically mid-pregnancy. By the early 1980s, CVS provided an alternative to amniocentesis that could be performed earlier in pregnancy—in the first trimester rather than the second—and provide similar information. These two procedures provide complete genetic information on the fetus—labs can sequence its entire genome.

This means that although these are most commonly used to detect the most common genetic disorders—Down syndrome, for example—they could, in principle, be used to detect more minor genetic abnormalities, or even identify normal genomic variations, like a predisposition for having red hair. (Such uses would be rare, mind you, since both procedures are invasive and carry a small risk to the fetus.) Historically, the alternative has been prenatal screening that relies primarily on an ultrasound, which isn't risky to the fetus but also cannot concretely diagnose a problem; thus, it must be followed up with one of the invasive procedures if a problem is suspected.

The fact that we can determine

Four methods for prenatal genetic testing

Method	ULTRASOUND
Common since	1960s
What it does and how it works	Allows doctors to identify physical signs of genetic problems. A probe transmits high-pitched sound waves into the belly. Visible fluid buildup on the back of a fetus' neck may be an early sign of a disorder
Performed at	11 to 14 weeks
Risks	Noninvasive. Effects of repeated ultrasounds on the fetus are unknown
Accuracy of genetic results	Abnormal results must be confirmed with a diagnostic test

SOURCES: ACOG; AMERICAN PREGNANCY ASSOCIATION; CDC; HUMAN REPRODUCTION UPDATE; JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY; MAYO CLINIC; NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE; NIH; NSGC

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PETER RYAN FOR TIME

AMNIOCENTESIS	CHORIONIC VILLUS SAMPLING (CVS)	MATERNAL BLOOD TEST
1960s	1980s	2011
Identifies chromosomal abnormalities, inherited diseases and defects in the spinal column or brain. A needle through the belly extracts amniotic fluid, which contains fetal cells that are then analyzed	Identifies chromosomal abnormalities and inherited diseases. A needle through the belly or a catheter through the cervix suctions cells from the placenta. Placental tissue contains the same genetic material as the fetus	Allows doctors to assess the risk of chromosomal abnormalities. A blood sample is taken from the mother. Maternal blood contains fetal DNA, which passes through the placenta
15 to 20 weeks	10 to 13 weeks	10 weeks or later
Miscarriage occurs about 1 out of every 1,000 procedures	Miscarriage occurs about 1 out of every 500 procedures	Noninvasive
99%	98% to 99%	Detects 99% of Down-syndrome cases; up to 50% of positive tests are false positives

characteristics of a baby in utero, combined with the availability of abortion, has always made some people nervous. It suggests eugenics, or a future of "designer babies." This is not all fanciful concern: in some countries, prenatal sex determination and sex-selective abortion have altered the overall sex ratios in the population. (For example, in recent years in China, the ratio peaked at 120 boys born for every 100 girls.) But in general, and in the U.S. in particular, prenatal screening has been effectively limited to serious genetic disorders, because the risk of harming the fetus has outweighed the value of the information for other uses.

THE NEW PRENATAL screening tests are a game changer. They represent a significant technological breakthrough, because the key to identifying problems or genetic risks is being able to see the baby's DNA. Amniocentesis and CVS accomplish this with amniotic fluid or placental material, both of which contain fetal cells and, hence, fetal DNA. But that means going inside the womb—with a needle, typically—and taking some cells. And that's what carries the risk.

Some fetal cells also circulate in the maternal bloodstream during pregnancy—that's not news—but the volume of fetal cells in maternal blood is very low, making them difficult to use in a practical way. The technological breakthrough was the recognition of cell-free fetal DNA—that is, fetal DNA outside of cells.

When cell-free DNA is isolated in maternal plasma, studies have shown 10% to 20% of it is fetal in origin. In lay terms, this means that researchers can be confident that a large share of what they are extracting comes from the fetus. In principle, if one could simply separate the maternal and fetal DNA, it would be possible to sequence the full fetal DNA using this procedure.

Technology is not quite there yet, so this procedure currently works by looking for things in the cell-free DNA that wouldn't be there if the DNA were only the mother's.

Think about it in terms of gender: women have two X chromosomes; men have one X and one Y. Imagine you look in a mom's cell-free DNA and find a bunch of Y chromosomes. The baby will be a boy, right? If you don't see any Y chromosomes, a girl.

Similarly, a fetus with Down syndrome has three copies of chromosome 21, rather than two, but two copies of all the other chromosomes. So if you look at a mix of fetal and maternal DNA together from a genetically normal mother and see relatively more copies of chromosome 21, you would suspect the baby has Down syndrome. If any chromosomal imbalance is striking enough, the test results will flag a potential problem.

At the moment, these tests fall short of what is possible with amniocentesis or CVS testing. One reason is that they focus on only the three most common trisomies: Down syndrome (trisomy 21), trisomy 18 and trisomy 13. Invasive testing will detect other trisomies, and can detect other types of chromosomal problems. Another shortcoming: both false negatives and false positives are possible.

This procedure relies on a statistical threshold test: sufficiently imbalanced and the test pings "positive." Not sufficiently imbalanced and it comes up negative. However, sometimes the imbalance in the chromosome counts isn't striking enough to flag as a positive test, even when the fetus does have a chromosomal abnormality. This is what is called a false negative. And on the other side, sometimes the chromosomes look imbalanced in the sample, but the baby is fine. This is a false positive.

False negatives are pretty rare in these new blood tests—for a woman in her early 30s with a negative result on this screening, the chance of a baby with a chromosomal abnormality is about 1 in 90,000. False positives on this test are also limited, but they matter more. For that same woman in her early 30s with a positive test result, the chance of having a baby with a chromosomal

problem is about 66%. In other words, 1 out of 3 women who receive results indicating abnormalities would go on to have a baby who is genetically normal.

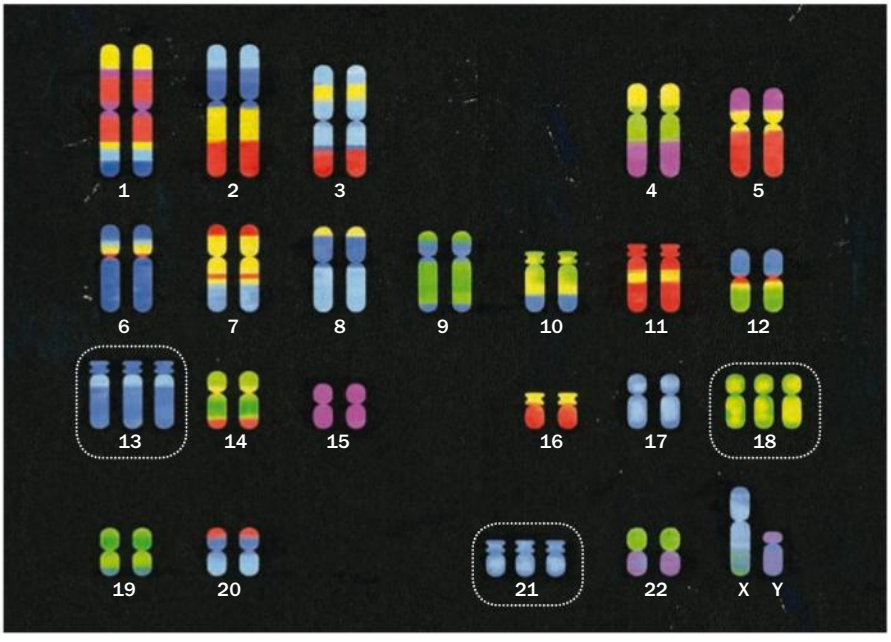
Experts agree that consequential decisions about a pregnancy should not be made without an invasive test as a follow-up. But this is likely to be a temporary issue. Effectively, the problem is one of genetic sequencing capacity and statistics. Already these tests are close to perfect on detection of gender. And the precision with which genetic predictions can be made will also improve. It is likely we are more than a few years away from the ability to use these tests as diagnostic.

As these tests improve, so too will the range of conditions they can detect. Researchers have reported on a case in which they used a version of this test to detect a small genetic issue called a microdeletion. The impact of this microdeletion, which was passed on from the mother, is an increased risk for nearsightedness and mild hearing loss. The mother in the study learned that she was passing on her poor eyesight and bad hearing to her child.

In principle, this technology could be used to detect anything for which we have a known genetic link. Researchers engaged in genome-wide association studies have, in the past few years, made progress on identifying a few genes that code for intelligence. Imagine you've tested yourself and you know you carry one of these intelligence genes but, sadly, your spouse does not. Now imagine you can easily learn if your fetus got your smart genes, or your spouse's not-so-smart ones. Or your genes for height, your risk for obesity and your spouse's gene for stubbornness (O.K., we haven't found this one yet).

Now take it a step further. Fetal DNA begins to circulate in the mother's blood at the very start of pregnancy. At the moment, these tests wait until 10 or 11 weeks of pregnancy so that the concentration of fetal DNA is high enough to use for accurate detection. But as the sequencing and statistics improve, we may find that it is possible to do the same testing at eight weeks. Or six.

What if you could know, at six weeks of pregnancy, whether your child would inherit your height, or hair color, or athletic prowess? As I mentioned earlier, early gender testing is already used for gender-selective abortion, largely outside the U.S. This was true even when gender detection was not possible until 18 or 20 weeks.



Some of the most commonly detected genetic abnormalities occur at chromosomes 13, 18 and 21—which manifest as Patau, Edwards and Down syndromes, respectively

THESE TECHNOLOGIES will raise questions far beyond gender. Many people terminate a pregnancy when they learn the fetus has Down syndrome. What about learning that the child will have autism? We are holding Pandora's box. Once we open it and let the information out, we lose control over what it is used for.

I would argue there are further implications. Let's say I find out my fetus has an increased genetic risk for obesity, and I ultimately have that child. How will I treat her? Will I obsess about everything she eats, every ounce of baby fat that doesn't immediately melt away? Will she grow up to be obese, or have an eating disorder I was party to with my worry? Could this actually make things worse rather than better? The idea that more information is better relies on our ability to ignore it.

I'm trained as an economist, and one of our general principles is that more information is better. Information helps us make better—more optimal—decisions. And, crucially, more information cannot make you worse off, since you can always just ignore it. Under this theory, these advances in genetic testing should be welcomed without reservation.

In many dimensions, the improvements in testing bring only good. The ability to more accurately detect serious genetic conditions earlier in pregnancy allows women and their partners to make difficult decisions about pregnancy termination earlier in the pregnancy when the medical complications are less significant.

The balance between the values of information and the possibility of misuse is a difficult one. It would be a shame to fail to pursue technologies that are likely to deliver great gains. At the same time, it is naive to pursue them without thinking about their consequences. And we should start thinking about these now.

Ready or not, the future is coming.

Oster is a professor of economics at Brown University and the author of Expecting Better

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Amid Donald Trump's stumbles, an America-first rebellion that is just beginning

By Joe Klein

IN THE MIDST OF HIS HISTORIC PRESIDENTIAL FIZZLE, Donald Trump gave a speech to the Detroit Economic Club. It's always fun to watch Trump deliver a prepared text. He appears to be discovering it with the rest of us, offering a running commentary on what he's reading, seemingly amazed that the ideas appearing on the teleprompter reflect his own. The result is a strange echolalia: "American steel," he said in Detroit. Then he repeated it, sounding surprised and impressed. "Steel!" and again, "STEEL! … will send new skyscrapers soaring."

What followed was pretty effective: "We will put new American metal into the spine of this nation. It will be American hands that rebuild this country, and it will be American energy—mined from American sources—that powers this country. It will be American workers who are hired to do the job. American workers. Americanism, not globalism, will be our new credo." This message was largely unremarked upon in the media coverage of the speech, most of which concentrated on either the silliness or staleness of the policies or the "facts" that were not true. But it is the heart of his appeal, and must be taken seriously, even if his candidacy no longer can be.

On the same day as the Detroit speech, 50 Republican national-security experts said they could not support Trump. A few days earlier, three prominent conservative columnists—Peggy Noonan, David Brooks and Charles Krauthammer—questioned Trump's mental stability and fitness for the presidency. There was the still unanswered question about Russian influence on his campaign: Which oligarchs have backed his projects? Which ones have loaned him money? We won't know until he releases his tax returns. And as always, there was a steady stream of noxious idiocies from the candidate himself.

THERE SEEMS NO END to the bad news for Trump, but this is presidential politics—and so there will be. The Trump collapse story will grow old. The media, whose attention span is only slightly longer than Trump's, will seek new themes. His polling numbers will stabilize—he's probably at rock bottom right now—and perhaps rebound.

What could bring Trump back? Let me count the ways: a series of terrorist attacks, a string of WikiLeaks embarrassments for the Democrats and Hillary Clinton, more bad economic news, a Hillary Clinton gaffe, a Bill Clinton scandal—or simply a change in the media focus to the weaknesses in Clinton's message, which has been dragged too far left by Bernie Sanders.

TEAM USA

Nearly half of Americans polled by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center in April said **U.S. involvement in the global economy was a bad thing** because it costs jobs and lowers wages.

The vast majority of Trump supporters, some 67%, said in the same poll that **the U.S. should not import more goods from developing countries.**

There's also the possibility—slim, I'll admit—that Trump will stop stepping all over himself and allow "Americanism, Not Globalism" to take center stage. The notion of "American [steel] in the spine of this nation" has a nostalgic emotional heft. It is a powerful message not just because it has resonance with wage-earning families but because it is an arrow directed at the heart of the Clinton Foundation, which has been an avid cheerleader for globalism and mostly operates overseas, sometimes with money from sketchy international characters. I don't believe the Clintons are crooks, but their staggering faith in their own righteousness has led to the appearance of impropriety in more than a few of these transactions.

IT WILL PROBABLY take a miracle for Trump to rebound sufficiently to win the presidency. But a loss in November is not the end of this story. In the midst of the Trump crumple, the New York *Times* put up a video of the idiot fringe of his supporters, filmed over the past year by *Times* reporters. These true believers seemed half crazed, disgraceful, barbaric. It was shocking to watch, and terrifying. Trump the candidate is a farce, but these people aren't. They have always been with us, the racists and hatemongers; they have always, thankfully, been a minority. But they seem more threatening now. They are part of an international movement. They have their own self-reinforcing media, feeding them a diet of paranoid distortions. They are being prepared by the likes of Sean Hannity and Rush Limbaugh—and, of course, by Trump himself—for a "rigged" election that they will lose. And then what?

Trump may go away as a serious political force; he will find new business franchises to foist on the unwitting. But his followers will remain—and they will remain our fellow citizens, a slowly dwindling demographic force, more desperate in their diminution. We badly need to find a way to talk to them when this cataclysm of a campaign is over. □

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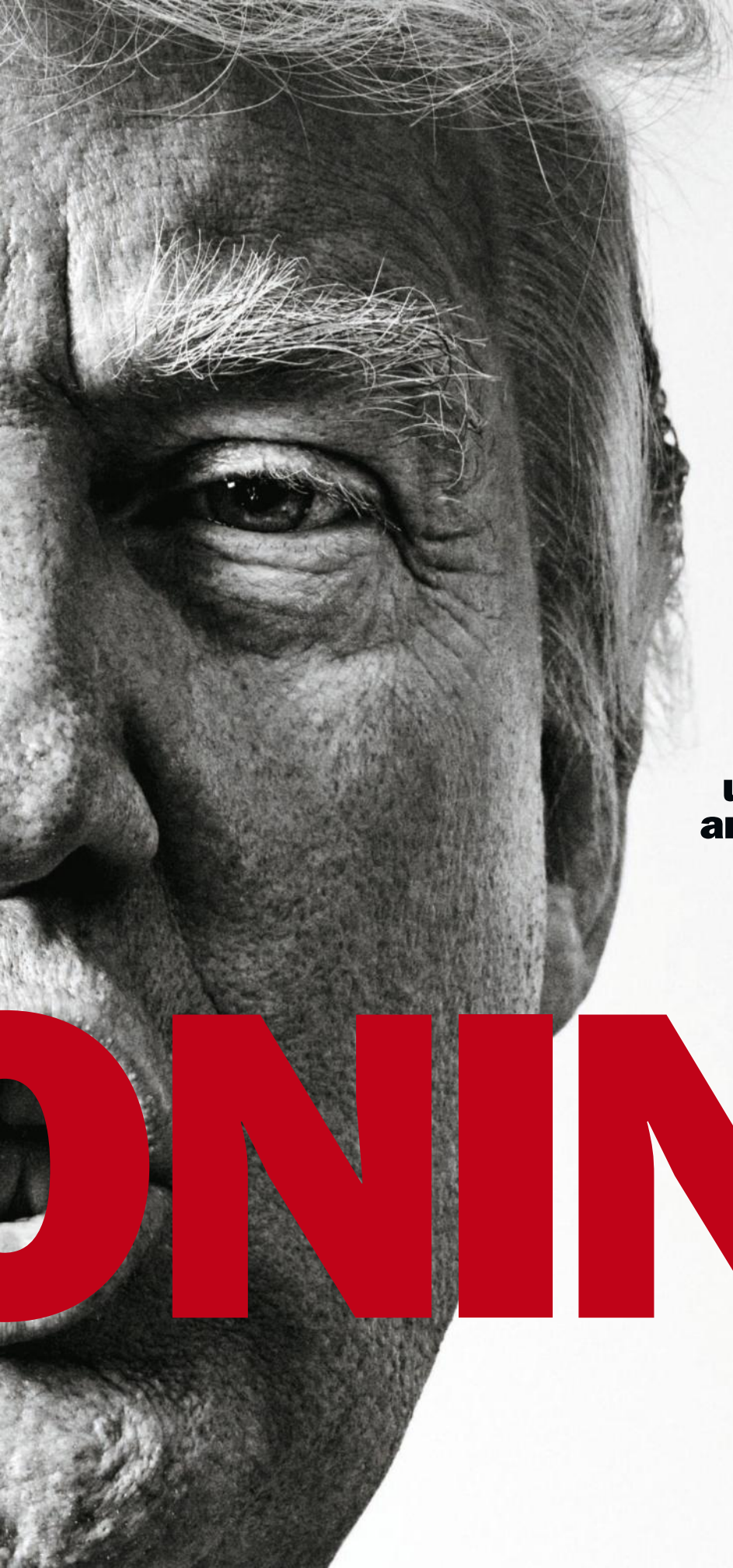


CAMPAIGN ★ 2016

Donald Trump's sinking polls, unending attacks and public blunders have the GOP reconsidering its strategy for November

ONING

By Alex Altman, Philip Elliott and Zeke J. Miller

PHOTOGRAPH BY FINLAY MACKAY

When Donald Trump mucks things up, the first person to let him know is usually Republican Party boss Reince Priebus. Almost every day, Trump picks up his cell phone to find Priebus on the line, urging him to quash some feud or clarify an incendiary remark.

The Wisconsin lawyer has been a dutiful sherpa to the Manhattan developer, guiding him through the dizzying altitude of the presidential race and lobbying the GOP to unite behind a figure who threatens its future.

But every bond has its breaking point. For this partnership, the moment nearly arrived in early August. Priebus was on vacation when he learned that Trump had declined to endorse Paul Ryan, the Speaker of the House and a close friend. The chairman had a frank message for the nominee, according to two Republican officials briefed on the call. Priebus told Trump that internal GOP polling suggested he was on track to lose the election. And if Trump didn't turn around his campaign over the coming weeks, the Republican National Committee would consider redirecting party resources and machinery to House and Senate races.

Trump denies the exchange ever took place. "Reince Priebus is a terrific guy," Trump told TIME. "He never said that." Priebus could not be reached for comment. But whatever the exact words spoken on the phone, there is no doubt that the possibility Republicans will all but abandon Trump now haunts his struggling campaign.

Since his convention in Cleveland, Trump has done almost nothing right by traditional standards. He has picked fights with senior Republicans and Gold Star parents, invited Russian spies to meddle in U.S. democracy, appeared to joke about gun enthusiasts' prematurely removing a U.S. President from office. He's shuffled campaign messages like playing cards and left GOP elders fretting that he lacks the judgment to be Commander in Chief. During a dismal two-week stretch, he surrendered a narrow lead over Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton and now trails by an average of 8 points in recent nationwide polls.

Trump has overcome rough patches before. But with fewer than 90 days until Nov. 8, he now faces a reckoning. There are daunting demographics to surmount. Allies complain of massive staff shortages in battleground states. And voters are skeptical of a billionaire reality star who seems to study the rules of campaigning only so he can break them.

Then there are the challenges entirely of Trump's own making. More than three months after he effectively clinched the Republican nomination, he has yet to settle on a strategy to match the demands of a broader electorate. In an interview with TIME on Aug. 9, the improvisational candidate sounded torn between conflicting pieces of advice, unsure of how much to hold back and when to let loose. "I am now listening to people that are telling me to be easier, nicer, be softer. And you know, that's O.K., and I'm doing that," he says. "Personally, I don't know if that's what the country wants."

Polls show that Trump has failed to grasp one of the essential truths about this extraordinary contest: in a race between the two most unpopular major-party nominees in modern history, it's in each campaign's interest to train the spotlight on the other. Clinton wants the race to be about Trump. Which is what the publicity-addled Republican wants too. And why not? It worked for him in the Republican primaries. "I got 14 million votes and won most of the states," he boasts. "I'm liking the way I ran in the primaries better."

But the general election will likely be decided by groups of voters who are rarely among the cheering throngs at his rallies. This is a fact that Trump is only now starting to confront. "I don't know why we're not leading by a lot," he admitted to a crowd of thousands in Jacksonville, Fla., on Aug. 3. One reason is that he's getting crushed by minority voting blocs that Republican strategists have suggested courting, such as blacks, Hispanics and young women.

Ask him about these struggles and the braggadocio fades to fatalism. "All I can do is tell the truth," he says. "If that does it, that's great. And if that doesn't do it, that's fine too." Even the best salesman must bow to the realities of the marketplace.

THE TROUBLE STARTED before Trump even left Cleveland. Twelve hours after accepting his party's nomination, he arrived in a half-empty hotel ballroom for a victory lap. It was a chance to thank supporters and bask in the previous night's afterglow. Free's "All Right Now" echoed through the speakers. And then, as Priebus' team watched live from their hotel a few blocks away, everything went wrong.

Two evenings before, Trump had crushed the last vestiges of Republican opposition, orchestrating an outburst of boos as Senator Ted Cruz of Texas delivered the ultimate snub: refusing to endorse his onetime rival. But for Trump, that victory wasn't enough. Rather than mend fences, he told fans he didn't want the GOP runner-up's endorsement and might bankroll a super PAC to kill Cruz's career. Apropos of nothing, he revived a dormant controversy involving an unflattering picture of the Texan's wife, boudoir shots of Trump's and a tiny super PAC

that no longer exists. He once again linked Cruz's father to the Kennedy assassination, a false conspiracy fed by a 50-year-old photo published in a supermarket tabloid. For good measure, Trump fired a parting shot at Ohio Governor John Kasich, another vanquished rival whose political machine could provide a boost in a critical swing state.

The riot of recrimination was a vivid reminder that some of Trump's worst traits as a candidate—paper-thin skin, an absence of discipline, a bottomless capacity to nurse grudges—are not going away. Republicans waiting for the long-promised presidential pivot seemed like characters in a Beckett play, trapped in Trump's theater of the absurd.

As Democrats hurled criticism during their convention, Trump tried to compete with press conferences. But his counterprogramming verged on the bizarre. In a striking breach of protocol, he urged Russia on July 27 to hack Clinton's emails. "Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," Trump said, essentially urging a geopolitical adversary to commit espionage against his opponent. Establishment-minded Republicans phoned one another. Was this really happening?

The next night, a Virginia lawyer named Khizr Khan stepped to the microphone in Philadelphia. The Pakistani émigré turned American citizen spoke of his son Humayun, a U.S. Army captain killed by a suicide bomber in Iraq in 2004. "If it was up to Donald Trump," he thundered, his son "never would have been in America." Brandishing a pocket-size copy of the Constitution, he addressed Trump directly: "You have sacrificed nothing and no one."

The return volley was predictable. Trump seemed to question whether Khan's wife Ghazala, who had stood silently alongside her husband, was barred from speaking because of her religion. "It's Queens," one Republican operative mused, invoking Trump's birthplace. "If they hit you, you hit back." A stirring moment became a multiday feud. And Trump lost. More than 70% of respondents in a Washington *Post*/ABC News poll said they disapproved of his handling of the dispute, including 59% of Republicans. The emergence of the Muslim parents, blistering Trump's policies through the scrim of their own patriotism, was more than karmic irony. It was strategic success. A hook had been dangled by the Clinton campaign that he could not help but bite.

Trump goes with his gut, and when his instincts betray him, no one can rein him in. "No one puts words in his mouth, and nobody decides what he says other than him," says longtime adviser Roger Stone. "Politics is nine-tenths discipline."

For party officials, the Trump campaign has become like the sign inside factories: X days without an accident, with the tally regularly resetting to zero. "I think what he wants to do and what he does do are two different things," says another senior GOP official.

And so more missteps followed. The campaign announced a 13-member economic advisory council with zero women and just three trained economists. The self-styled law-and-order candidate attacked fire marshals for turning away supporters when his venues hit capacity. At a rally, he described watching a U.S. plane deliver $400 million in cash to Iran in exchange for the release of American hostages. Trump's own campaign acknowledged that he was wrong; it was footage of the prisoners being freed in Geneva. The candidate repeated the canard anyway, goaded by an audience that bought the story.

Trump says he's heeding advice to be nicer. 'I don't know if that's what the country wants.'

When a chorus of criticism rained down from Republicans, Trump lashed back. He slammed Senators John McCain of Arizona, the party's 2008 nominee, and Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire. Both are incumbents locked in tight reelection races. He trolled Ryan a week before the House Speaker's contentious primary, withholding an endorsement in nearly the same language Ryan had once deployed against him. "I'm not quite there yet," Trump said coyly.

For Republicans loyal to the party but scornful of their nominee, the Trump campaign was increasingly becoming a moral conundrum. As if to goad them, Trump even began to call the integrity of the American democratic process into question. "I'm afraid the election is going to be rigged," he said in Ohio. "I have to be honest."

On Aug. 9 in North Carolina, he appeared to go even further. In an errant aside, he said the only remedy to a more liberal Supreme Court under a President Clinton would be Second Amendment supporters. "If she gets to pick her judges, nothing you can do, folks," Trump said, before shifting his tone. "Although the Second Amendment people, maybe there is, I don't know." Critics pounced, saying those words could spur a fanatic to endanger Clinton's life. The Secret Service, which investigates threats against its protectees, said it was aware of the remark. Trump responded by arguing that he was simply encouraging activists to exercise their political power at the polls and blamed the press for misinterpreting his words. Ryan, the highest-ranking elected Republican, said it sounded like"a joke gone bad."

At Clinton headquarters in Brooklyn, aides still nursing scars from skirmishes with Bernie Sanders marveled at their good fortune. As in all campaigns, researchers watch every public event, read every interview, archive every tweet. "On other campaigns, we would have to scrounge for crumbs," says a senior Clinton adviser. "Here, it's a fire hose. He can set himself on fire at breakfast, kill a nun at lunch and waterboard a puppy in the afternoon. And that doesn't even get us to prime time."

Republicans began to openly wonder whether Trump could be trusted with the nation's nuclear arsenal. Sensing an opportunity to pounce, Barack Obama declared Trump "woefully unprepared" for the presidency during an East Room press conference. Hank Paulson, a former Bush Treasury Secretary, said Trump had led "a populist hijacking of one of the United States' great political parties." Fifty Republicans with deep experience in national security signed

UNFORCED ERRORS

Trump's rise in the Republican primaries was propelled by his ability to grab media attention with outlandish claims and to pummel his opponents with insults. But those same instincts have become liabilities in the general-election campaign, as a broader group of voters have begun to consider him for the Oval Office.

JOHN McCAIN
Trump knocked the military service of the 2008 GOP nominee during an Iowa event in July 2015: "He's a war hero because he was captured," he said. "I like people that weren't captured."

FALLOUT
Trump rebuffed requests to apologize and drew stiff Republican criticism for his treatment of the war hero. Under prodding from party insiders, he finally endorsed McCain.

MEGYN KELLY
After a tough debate, he said of the Fox anchor, "You could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever."

FALLOUT
The apparent reference to menstruation has been used by Clinton allies to illustrate his alleged sexism.

NEW JERSEY MUSLIMS
He claimed to have watched "thousands" of Muslims in Jersey City cheer as the World Trade Center collapsed in 2001. "It was on television," he told ABC News.

FALLOUT
No footage has been found of this incident, and Trump never corrected himself. The event has been used to highlight Trump's loose relation to facts.

RACIST RETWEETS
Trump retweeted false statistics that overstated the percentage of white homicide victims killed by blacks. The tweet showed a picture of a dark-skinned man holding a gun.

FALLOUT
Trump claimed he was not responsible for the accuracy of retweets, and he has continued to retweet posts from avowed white supremacists, leading to charges of racism.

MOCKING THE DISABLED
At a rally, Trump used hand gestures to apparently mock a reporter with a physical disability. Trump denied the charge.

FALLOUT
Rival focus groups identified the clip as one of the most effective attacks against Trump.

a letter opposing him. A steady stream of Republican operatives and members of Congress, including Senator Susan Collins of Maine, announced that they could not vote for Trump either.

"This was a terrible week, and it kept going from bad to worse," says veteran Republican consultant Scott Reed, who ran Bob Dole's 1996 campaign. "He's got to stop picking fights and settling scores."

WITH THEIR CANDIDATE mired in self-sabotage, Republicans could only watch and wince. "I don't think we've seen anything like this since George Wallace," said retail mogul Art Pope. Sitting at a lakeside hotel in the Colorado Rockies on July 31, the conservative megadonor wondered how his party had wound up cowering in fear of the latest tweet from a former reality star. "My concern is Donald Trump will depress the Republican vote and hurt down-ballot candidates," said Pope, a close ally of North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory. "We're going to lose races because of him. I just hope it's not all lost."

Republicans groan that the difficult task of keeping their Senate majority gets tougher with each outré remark. Which is why the RNC is considering shifting some cash and staff away from the presidential race and toward down-ballot contests. That plan is already in motion among powerful outside groups that typically spend hundreds of millions of dollars on behalf of the party nominee. "There's going to have to be some resource reallocation," says a senior Republican official familiar with internal party deliberations. A second senior party official routinely instructs Senate campaign managers to distance their candidates from Trump. "Don't worry about the appearances," the official said on a recent conference call. "Worry about winning."

That explains why Republicans running for office this year don't meet Trump's plane at airports or introduce him at rallies. In some places, the avoidance strategy seems to be working. Senator Pat Toomey is in a statistical tie in his re-election bid in Pennsylvania, a state where Trump trails by about 10 points. In the key swing state of Florida, Senator Marco Rubio is running ahead in his re-election bid even as Trump narrowly trails Clinton. But in New Hampshire, Trump's troubles may be dragging down Ayotte, who plummeted from a virtual tie to 10 points down in a recent poll.

On calls with Senate campaign donors, Trump often comes up, as moneymen probe for details on coordination with the top of the ticket. "What Trump campaign?" one swing-state Senate campaign manager snapped at a volunteer recently. "We have more offices than they do."

Internal and public polling suggests that the party will see record numbers of split-ticket voters who shun Trump but remain open to supporting vulnerable congressional candidates. Traditionally, these voters would be among the last targets for the party's get-out-the-vote effort. But that might change if Trump's poll numbers remain moribund. That's why Priebus told the nominee that the RNC would soon decide which voters to prioritize. Trump, who is helping the party collect cash, is mystified by this account. "Why would they state that when I'm raising millions of dollars for them?" he asked TIME.

Like the rest of the party, Trump's staff has been flummoxed by his political naiveté. They describe a candidate who doesn't understand the basics of modern campaigns, from why you knock on doors to how to read a poll to why he should be dialing for dollars more aggressively. His headquarters has enough palace intrigue and warring fiefs to rival the fictional badlands of Westeros. "You're always afraid of getting fired," says one staffer, "but it's his fault, not ours."

TARGETING A HISPANIC JUDGE

Trump charged that the judge overseeing a civil lawsuit against him could not be fair because his parents were Mexican.

FALLOUT

Republicans lined up to defend Indiana-born Judge Gonzalo Curiel. House Speaker Paul Ryan said it was "the textbook definition of a racist comment." Trump kept saying it.

ATTACKING THE KHANS

After Khizr Khan criticized Trump at the Democratic convention, Trump seemed to question whether his wife Ghazala had a right to speak under Islam.

FALLOUT

More than 70% of respondents in a national poll said they disapproved of Trump's response.

REPUBLICAN INFIGHTING

After a Republican convention designed to unite the party, Trump continued his slash-and-burn attacks on fellow Republicans, initially refusing to endorse Ryan in his primary.

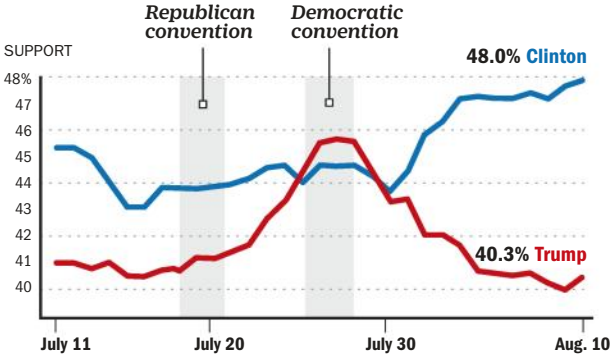
FALLOUT

A postconvention poll showed Trump losing support among key GOP demographics, including white men, evangelicals and voters without college degrees.

KELLY: BRIAN CAHN—ZUMA WIRE; TRUMP: RICHARD ELLIS—ZUMA WIRE; KHANS: ALEX WONG—GETTY IMAGES

THESUMMERSLIDE

Trump enjoyed a brief polling bump after the GOP convention in Cleveland. But he promptly lost the advantage after a series of controversies that have Republicans worried about his viability.



SOURCE: REALCLEARPOLITICS AVERAGE OF NATIONAL HEAD-TO-HEAD POLLS

These staff members are still cashing checks but have begun to lose faith that their boss can or should win the top prize in American politics. Most highly regarded Republican operatives have stayed away from the campaign, wary of being blackballed for future gigs. "If someone applied for a job and brought in a résumé that had Trump 2016 on it," says a GOP fundraising consultant, "I wouldn't give them an interview."

BUT IF MANY REPUBLICANS are urging a more measured approach, still others preach confrontation as the surest path to victory. In early August, Trump traveled with Priebus to the tony island of Nantucket, off the Massachusetts coast. At an $800,000 fundraiser, he hobnobbed inside a steamy home filled with donors who wrote checks of $50,000 or more. Over and over, they pressed Trump to "take the gloves off" and attack Clinton as well as Republicans who won't fall in line. His response, related by an attendee: "Reince tells me not to."

Trump still has reasons to be bullish. For starters, roughly two-thirds of poll respondents don't believe his opponent is honest or trustworthy. There's no predicting what outside forces could intrude: another batch of leaked emails, a terrorist attack, a blow to the economy. Trump's team frames the election as a choice between continuity and change, and change—even Trump's radical variety—usually wins out. Conservative critics are finding ways to justify their vote for him. Some cite the stakes. "Forty years of Supreme Court Justices are going to be determined this November," says Senator Cory Gardner, a Colorado Republican who has not formally endorsed Trump. Trump himself appreciates the power of that argument. "You have no choice," he told doubters at his Cleveland press conference. "You've got to go for Trump. Supreme Court."

If his position is precarious, even his fiercest critics believe it's too early to write him off. There are signs Trump is trying to change. During an economic speech in Detroit, he ignored more than a dozen protesters and delivered a game impersonation of a conventional Republican. He is teeing up his first televised ad campaign of the general election in the coming weeks. "They've spent $240 million on ads," Trump says, dramatically overstating the advertising spending on behalf of Clinton. "I've spent nothing. Zero. Purposely." He didn't think he needed to. Polls disagree.

History suggests that 8-point leads in August can melt like ice cream in the heat. Al Gore was down by that margin in August 2000 and came back to win the popular vote. In 1988, George H.W. Bush rebounded from a similar deficit to win the White House. Over the coming weeks, Clinton's convention bounce may dissipate.

The debates in the fall will provide Trump an opportunity to change his public perception. Trump told TIME he would "absolutely" debate Clinton three times as scheduled but, ever the wily foe, suggested that he might try to renegotiate the terms. Clinton's unforced errors and defensive crouch have only magnified voters' distrust. But most seasoned Republicans are far from optimistic about Trump's chances. "It's hard to say I've given up hope," says a party official. "But I have yet to see evidence of anything else."

Trump has made a sport of defying prediction, party orthodoxy and political gravity. He thinks he's on to something he alone can see, and if he is right, it wouldn't be the first time. For a candidate who has staked his campaign on a pessimistic vision of the nation, he still manages to summon a sense of optimism despite the darkening polls. "I actually think we're doing better," Trump says. "I may be wrong, but I think we're doing much better than anybody understands." ◻

World

REQUIEM FOR VENEZUELA

How the nation with more oil than anywhere else in the world fell apart

By Ioan Grillo/Caracas

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALVARO YBARRA ZAVALA FOR TIME

A street performer works for spare change on a traffic officer's pedestal in Caracas in June

Residents line up hoping for cooking gas in Barquisimeto, Venezuela's fourth largest city

ALVARO YBARRA ZAVALA—GETTY IMAGES REPORTAGE FOR TIME

IN VENEZUELA THE FOOD LINES ARE only the most visible evidence of a nation in free fall. Known as *las colas,* the lines form before dawn and last until nightfall, several bodies thick and zigzagging for miles in leafy middle-class neighborhoods and ragged slums alike. In a country that sits atop the world's largest known petroleum reserves, hungry citizens wait on their assigned day for whatever the stores might stock: with luck, corn flour to make arepas, and on a really good day, shampoo.

"I never dreamed it would come to this," says Yajaira Gutierrez, a 41-year-old accountant, waiting her turn in downtown Caracas. "That in Venezuela, with all our petroleum, we would be struggling to get corn cakes."

In the capital's Dr. José María Vargas hospital, a doctor watched a 73-year-old woman die of kidney failure because the hospital lacked the medicine to perform routine dialysis. In a Caracas police station, more than 150 prisoners crowded into a cell made for 36, standing shirtless (there was no room to sit) in the stench of sweat and feces. In arid Lara state, an elementary-school teacher told of children fainting in class from hunger. The economy contracted by almost 6% last year and is expected to shrink by as much as 10% this year.

Venezuela was once Latin America's exemplar: home to Simón Bolívar, who freed much of the continent from Spanish rule. Now, after years of political mismanagement and months in economic collapse, it is the region's cautionary tale. The bolivar, the currency named for the Liberator himself, is now carried in backpacks instead of wallets; one unit is worth less than a penny. While production plummets, crime soars. Fights frequently break out in food lines. The number of murders last year ranged between 17,000 and 28,000. No one knows the exact tally, but regardless, it would put the nation's murder rate—driven by a lethal mix of street gangs, drug cartels, leftist guerrillas and right-wing paramilitaries jostling for power—among the world's highest. Even animals are dying: some 50 zoo animals have starved to death over the past six months because there's not enough food.

"It is like there had been a natural disaster, like a hurricane which swept things away," Henrique Capriles, the governor of Miranda state and a key opposition leader, tells TIME. "If we don't look for a democratic constitutional solution, I fear there will be an explosion in Venezuela, and it will finish collapsing."

REACHING THAT SOLUTION seems all but impossible in a country still ruled by the legacy of a dead man. During the 14 years Hugo Chávez spent as President before his death in 2013 from cancer, he set in motion the economic and political dynamics that created the current catastrophe—and the paralysis that has resulted from it. In Venezuela, almost all politicians—

A woman tries to get word of her brother, among the 600 who rioted at a squalid police station in June

and many ordinary people—still define themselves either as Chavistas or as opposition. The current President, former bus driver Nicolás Maduro, claims the Chavista name but has none of his mentor's charisma—or for that matter his good fortune. Chávez enjoyed sky-high oil prices for much of his time in office, but on Maduro's watch the price of oil has dropped from $100 a barrel to as low as $25 a barrel. (It's now at $35 a barrel.) Chávez enjoyed massive popular support, but in the December 2015 midterm elections, the opposition won a majority of the assembly for the first time since 1998.

But the opposition has been able to do little with its new power—thanks again to the legacy of Chávez. Chavista justices in the supreme court have struck down 18 laws and motions passed by the assembly; among the court's decisions is one that overturned a law ordering the release of more than 100 political prisoners, including opposition leader Leopoldo López, jailed in a case the prosecutor himself said was rigged. Blocked in the legislature, the opposition is instead taking direct aim at Maduro, gathering more than a million signatures to demand a recall referendum that would remove him from office. Surveys indicate that the President would lose badly, but Maduro still has the tools of the state at his disposal. Those include the military and the police, which on July 27 blocked opposition protesters attempting to march on the National Electoral Council's headquarters in Caracas.

Maduro has made it clear he's going nowhere. In May he declared a state of emergency, ordering military maneuvers to prepare for a hypothetical foreign invasion. On TV, he blames the crisis on rich Venezuelans working with the CIA and Colombian paramilitaries across the border. A group of Chavista militants march daily in defiant support of their embattled President. "We are ready to spill our blood defending the *patria* [homeland]," says Endri Carvajal at a rally of Chavista motorcycle taxis. "If there is an intervention, their soldiers will die here."

Venezuela shouldn't be like this. The country sits on 18% of the world's proven oil reserves, adding up to nearly 300 billion barrels. But what Venezuelan diplomat and OPEC co-founder Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonzo once called "the devil's excrement" has been a mixed blessing from the start, enriching a moneyed elite even as the poor cling to life in hillside shantytowns like the Petare slum above Caracas, home to half a million people.

Despite gaping inequality, however, Venezuela remained relatively peaceful until the late 1980s, when oil prices hit a prolonged slump. Protests over economic conditions deteriorated into looting, and amid the turmoil, a young paratrooper named Hugo Chávez attempted to lead a coup in 1992. Chávez would serve two years in prison for his actions, but he eventually rebounded to win the presidency at the ballot box in 1998. He

began as a straightforward populist who made little mention of socialism, focusing his wrath on Venezuela's corrupt establishment while winning the hearts of the poor with his charisma.

But after surviving a failed coup in 2002, Chávez took a radical turn. He started launching daily broadsides against rich Venezuelans and their American friends. The U.S. was already a convenient bogeyman in Latin American politics, thanks to a long history of sponsoring coups, outright invasions and puppet governments. Chávez took special aim at then U.S. President George W. Bush, whom he cast as a literal devil, quipping that the lectern "smells of sulfur still today" after following Bush in a 2006 speech to the U.N. General Assembly.

By then Chávez was a rock star for the global left, which thought it had found a post–Cold War model in what the Venezuelan President called his Bolivarian revolution. But Chávez always practiced a strange kind of socialism, relying on Venezuela's oil industry as much as any capitalist predecessor. With oil eventually rising as high as $140 a barrel in 2008, his government was building a million new homes and corner medical clinics (many staffed by Cuban doctors, part of a crude-for-medicine deal with Havana) and even handing out laptops and washing machines in the barrios. "We said that Venezuela became the country of the happy poor," says economist Eduardo Fortuny. "Without really improving their income, he gave them more things. Chávez's popularity went hand in hand with his public spending."

Chávez also fixed prices on basic foodstuffs, from coffee to cookies. When it became unprofitable for Venezuelan companies to make such things, Chávez simply used oil money to import them from abroad. Winning election after election, he went on to expropriate hundreds of private companies, from sugar plantations to dairy farms. And to stop people from dumping their bolivares, which were losing value, he restricted who could buy dollars and fixed the rate.

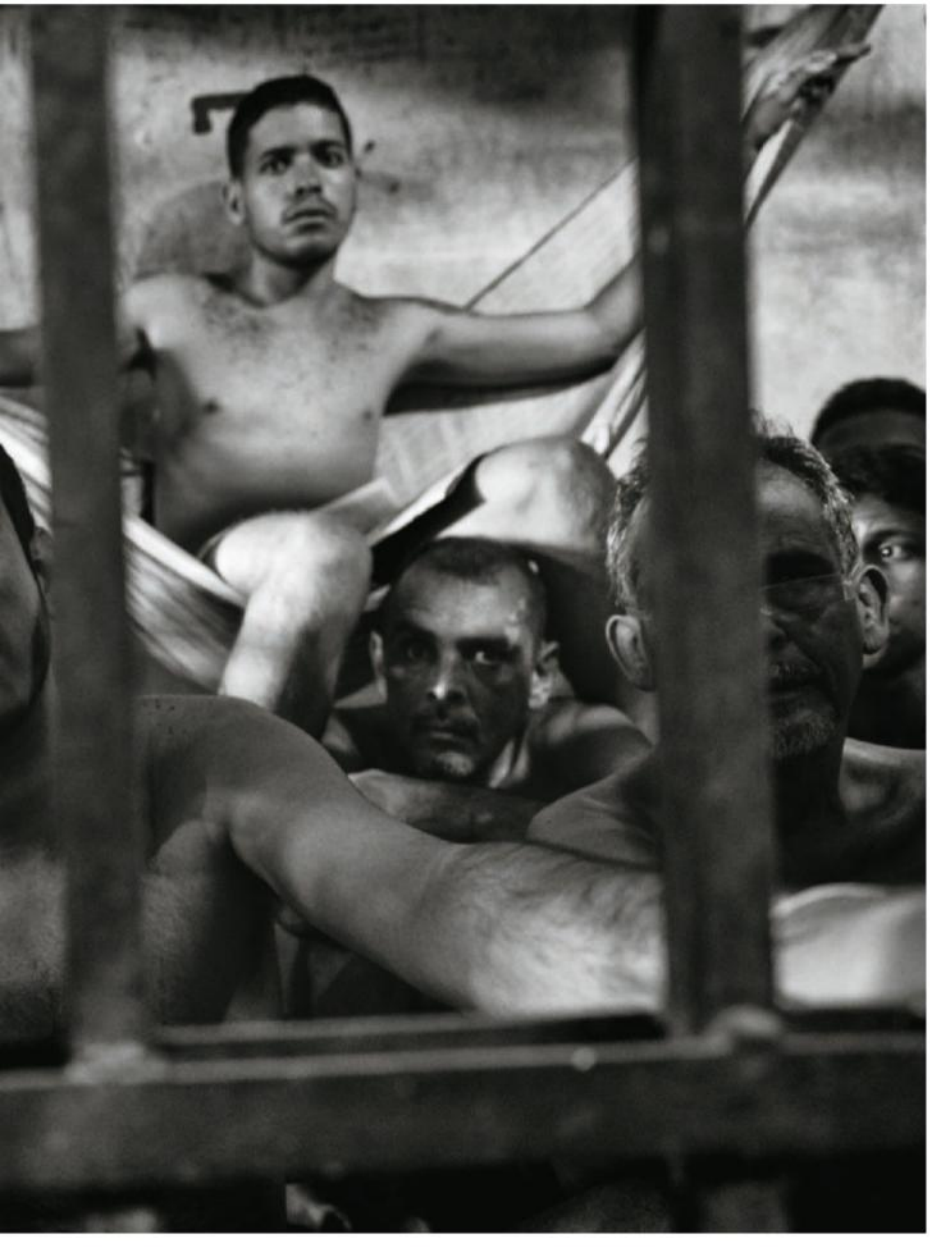
Those measures sowed the seeds of the current crisis. Unable to legally buy dollars, businessmen turned to the black market, where exchange rates soared. While the official base rate is 10 bolivares to the dollar, the bolivar now trades on the

Standing room only is the norm in jails, like this one in Caracas

street at more than 1,000. The collapse of the currency is aggravated by oil's low price—Venezuela can no longer count on its oil exports' bringing back enough dollars, which means it can't import enough goods to sell at the fixed prices, leading to shortages.

And domestic production has plummeted as farms and factories that Chávez expropriated are all but idle. The crisis has hurt international companies as well, which have seen some $10 billion in profits wiped away over the past 18 months. Many are giving up on the country. In May, Coca-Cola suspended its bottling operation in Venezuela because of a lack of sweetener, and in July, McDonald's temporarily stopped selling Big Macs because of a lack of bread.

AS BAD AS THINGS ARE in Caracas, the misery is worse in the provinces. Mario Mora, a 52-year-old laborer, sits in the



‘I fear there will be an explosion in Venezuela, and it will finish collapsing.’

—Henrique Capriles, governor of Miranda state

searing sun in the town of Pavia after waiting since dawn for an arrival of gas canisters to cook and heat water. The wait is in vain—at 4 p.m., a police officer informs the crowd that no gas will arrive until the next day. Mora will have to forage for twigs to make a fire in order to cook corn cakes and beans for his wife and four children. They eat one meal a day. “I have always been poor, but I have never seen it as bad as this,” he says.

Hardly better off are those in the urban middle class who call themselves “the new poor.” Yajaira Gutierrez, the accountant waiting in a food line in Caracas, says that five years ago, her salary was worth about $800 per month. Now, despite regular raises, it would equal less than $70. When she can’t get food in the shops, she turns to the black market, where hawkers sell foodstuffs for 10 times as much as the stores. “I have been cleaning myself with the soap meant to wash dishes,” she says.

Medicines often can’t be found at any price. After businessman Rainer Espejo discovered that his 2-year-old daughter Barbara had leukemia, he had to turn to a neighbor who worked in Colombia to smuggle the drugs she needs. With the power cuts, Barbara is going through treatment with sporadic air-conditioning and water shortages that make it hard to keep her clean. “It is a cruel form of survival,” says Espejo. “You can get depressed. But the problem is still there, so you have to face it.”

No less striking are the packed jails. Some prisoners get access to water just one hour per day, urinating and defecating in plastic bags that they wait for the guards to collect. “In these conditions, your mind deteriorates,” says Daniel Sayago, 24, who has been accused of mugging. “You have to shut down parts of it to survive.”

For opposition leader Capriles, the only meaningful change means recalling Maduro, whose term runs to 2019, and holding new elections. Capriles says a new President—which could mean him—would be able to eliminate the price and currency controls while alleviating the side effects with humanitarian aid from abroad that’s more likely to flow to a friendlier government.

But the fate of the country may ultimately rest on the army, another player in a political realm crowded with armed groups. The military has so far backed Maduro, but it has successfully overthrown Venezuelan governments three times in the past 70 years, and Chávez filled the top ranks with allies after the 2002 coup attempt. “The armed forces are arriving at a difficult hour, decisive,” says Capriles. “And they are going to have to make a decision: Are they with Maduro, or are they with the constitution?” —*With reporting by* JORGE BENEZRA/CARACAS

Untangling Alzheimer's

When it comes to preventing cognitive decline, simple lifestyle changes are finally being borne out by science

BY MANDY OAKLANDER

MAJID FOTUHI BUILT HIS FIRST BRAIN out of wood and foam. It was the best way, he thought, to help his fellow students at Harvard grasp how complex and beautiful the organ is. Fotuhi hired a pair of art-school students for the summer of 1993, and millimeters at a time, they sketched a dead human's brain that Fotuhi schlepped back and forth between the neuroanatomy lab and the art studio across campus. By the time classes started that fall, they had turned their sketches into a 5-ft.-high replica that hinged open to reveal hundreds of discrete parts, including some purple blood vessels and a peach-colored cortex.

Decades later, Fotuhi, now a neurologist who specializes in the prevention of Alzheimer's disease, remains intent on the organ. "It's not this mysterious black box sitting up there, disconnected," he says. "It's tightly, tightly connected to the rest of the body, and you can take care of it the same way you can take care of your teeth."

Fotuhi has long believed that doing just that—taking care of the brain as well as you take care of the rest of your body—can stave off cognitive decline. For most of his career, that thinking put him in the minority; neurologists, stumped by Alzheimer's, have focused their efforts on trying to find a cure for the disease.

They have made progress, but doctors do not yet have a reliable way to treat dementia with drugs. At this rate, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are expected to cost the U.S. $1 trillion in health care costs by 2050.

That projection is dire, but a glut of new research presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference in July suggests that a path paved by reasonable lifestyle choices—including exercise and targeted brain

ILLUSTRATION BY GERARD DUBOIS FOR TIME

training—may indeed protect the brain as it ages. "I felt like jumping up and down in the middle of the conference hall," says Fotuhi. "Diet, exercise, sleep and stress: those are generally not considered culprits for a problem as big as dementia. But for the first time, we have evidence that levels of tau"—thought to be a marker of Alzheimer's—"can change with lifestyle interventions such as exercise. The whole thing is coming together."

PEOPLE HAVE LONG PUZZLED over what causes some people to lose their mind in old age. In ancient times, dementia was believed to be an inevitable part of aging. Later, people thought it was a punishment from God for sin. Now, it's mostly blamed on Alzheimer's disease. Experts still don't know exactly what causes Alzheimer's, but in 1992 one idea, called the amyloid cascade hypothesis, took hold. It suggested that the excessive buildup of a protein in the brain—amyloid, which clumps together into plaques—is the main driver of Alzheimer's. The buildup causes another protein, tau, to twist into tangles and cut off the supply of nutrients to brain cells, ultimately killing them. This hypothesis propelled the search for a pill that can stop these plaques and tangles from forming or undo them once they're there.

The overproduction of amyloid is thought to be a cause of early-onset Alzheimer's, which can affect the brains of people in their 40s and 50s. Little if anything can be done to prevent early-onset Alzheimer's, though it is an active area of current research. But when it comes to the Alzheimer's that most people think of—a disease of the elderly that causes confusion and memory loss—there is a lot that experts still do not agree on, including whether the single-minded focus on amyloid and tau has been right.

Scientists like Fotuhi like to point out that plaques and tangles are sometimes found in the brains of people who don't have symptoms of dementia. Researchers in this camp often cite a story about Sister Mary, a tiny, social nun born in 1892 who had a thunderous laugh and taught until her death at age 101. In a late-1980s study of the lives and deaths of almost 700 elderly nuns, an autopsy revealed that Sister Mary's brain was so full of amyloid plaques and tau tangles that she met the criteria for Alzheimer's disease. Yet in life, her mind was reportedly sharp until the end.

Other research has suggested that amyloid isn't enough to explain all—and possibly even most—Alzheimer's cases. A 2015 article published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience* made the case for rejecting the entire amyloid cascade hypothesis. Meanwhile, other factors—such as heart health, sleep quality and physical activity—are emerging as potential ways to help prevent dementia in some people.

By taking factors like these more seriously, scientists are forming a whole new Alzheimer's attack plan: improve the health of the heart and you'll have a big impact on the brain. Lifestyle changes won't ever eradicate the disease. But they may be the best prevention we know of right now.

These lifestyle changes may help protect the brain as you age

1 SHORE UP YOUR HEART
Of all the things you can do, reducing the risk of heart disease has the strongest evidence of benefits for the brain. That means treating hypertension, high lipids, cholesterol, obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

2 EMPHASIZE EXERCISE
Physical activity reduces the risk and severity of cognitive decline. Aerobic exercise has been shown to grow the volume of certain brain regions that tend to shrink during aging.

3 LEARN NEW THINGS
Engaging intellectually with the world across a lifetime through activities like writing letters and reading has been linked in brain autopsies to better cognitive health in old age.

4 BE SOCIAL
Richer social lives are associated with higher levels of cognition. Loneliness, conversely, is connected with poorer brain health.

5 TREAT DEPRESSION
Depression in middle age—which is when it is most prevalent—is linked to twice the risk of cognitive decline, though it's not clear if that's a cause or an effect.

6 SLEEP WELL
Studies have found a relationship between poor sleep and risk of cognitive decline and Alzheimer's. Improving poor sleep appears to reduce these risks.

IN A 2014 ARTICLE published in *The Lancet Neurology,* researchers projected that almost a third of the cases of Alzheimer's disease worldwide—9.6 million of them—could be prevented by things that are within most people's power to change: hypertension in middle age, diabetes, obesity, physical activity, depression, smoking and low education were all found to play a role.

Of these factors, heart health seems to be the most important. According to an estimate published in the journal *Hypertension,* if every middle-aged American with high blood pressure got properly treated for it, about 25% of dementia cases would be wiped out. "Given that we spend almost $200 billion a year dealing with dementia, 25% is a pretty big savings," says Dr. Lon White, one of the authors of the *Hypertension* study and a neuroepidemiologist who spent much of his 50-year research career at the National Institutes of Health.

The link between the heart and the brain is logical when you think about it. "The brain is a sea of blood vessels," Fotuhi says, and because neurons require a lot of oxygen to fire properly, the brain uses 20% of the blood pumped by the heart. "For that reason, anything that affects blood flow affects the brain." When people have hypertension, obesity or Type 2 diabetes, the blood

vessels don't work as well, the flow isn't as good, and the neurons become thirsty for oxygen.

Because heart disease is the No. 1 killer of Americans, doctors and public-health experts have focused their advice on heart health for the past 30 years, and today the rates of death from heart disease and stroke have declined. Researchers are now beginning to see a link outside the lab between stronger hearts and healthier minds. One study published in February in the *New England Journal of Medicine* dug into data from 5,205 people ages 60 and older who are part of the Framingham Heart Study, which has tracked dementia in its participants since 1975. Over the 30 years of data, the incidence of dementia in people with at least a high school diploma fell by 44%.

"We think heart-disease risk factors have a big effect on brain health," says Dr. Kristine Yaffe of the University of California, San Francisco, who is a leading researcher on predictors of dementia. "Lifestyle factors are so important, even though they sound sort of soft, and a lot of people therefore think they can't possibly be that effective. But I'm not so sure. They're not expensive, they don't have side effects, and they're good for the rest of the body too. So why wouldn't you make lifestyle changes?"

These natural interventions appear to have powerful effects on some parts of the brain that are vulnerable to aging. Consider the hippocampus, which is crucial to memory. It's one of the first regions of the brain to shrivel when people age, shrinking by about 0.5% each year after age 40. A smaller hippocampus helped researchers predict who would develop Alzheimer's disease in some studies. This brain region can also grow, however. When older adults without dementia were assigned to do aerobic exercise or light stretching for a year, the people in the stretching group lost 1.4% of their hippocampus, but those in the exercise group grew their hippocampus by 2%—the equivalent of reversing cognitive loss by about two years. Meditation has also been shown to increase the size of the hippocampus.

DEMENTIA APPEARS to plant its roots in the brain decades before a diagnosis, which is why many leaders in the field are looking for ways to detect it at the onset of the disease, not after problems start. Similarly, Fotuhi and his colleagues think that the earlier that people begin preventive measures, the better.

That said, it's never too late to adopt a healthy lifestyle. A randomized controlled trial presented at the Alzheimer's Association conference showed that even sedentary elderly people with mild cognitive impairment can improve their brains by starting to exercise.

With a trainer, half of the 70 adults in the study did 45 minutes of high-intensity aerobic exercise four times a week, while the control group did light stretching. After just six months, the active adults improved in tests of executive function, which rules tasks like organization and attention, compared with those in the control group. "It says that aerobic exercise is potentially antiaging, in a sense," says lead researcher Laura Baker of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. The study also found that tau protein was significantly reduced in the oldest people in the aerobic group. "To us, this is a phenomenal finding, because there is no drug trial that's ever been conducted to show that any drug now can reduce tau protein in cerebrospinal fluid," Baker says.

AT FOTUHI'S NEUROLOGY PRACTICE in Virginia, the NeuroGrow Brain Fitness Center, he gives each patient a battery of cognitive tests to see their strengths and weaknesses, then puts them through a three-month boot camp that costs $6,000 to $7,000, depending on insurance coverage. People learn how to exercise, meditate, eat a Mediterranean diet, reduce stress and improve their sleep.

Natural interventions appear to have powerful effects on areas of the brain that are vulnerable to aging

They also play brain games that are tailored to their individual weaknesses, go through cognitive behavioral therapy and have hours-long sessions of neurofeedback, a technique that allows patients to see their brain activity in real time and modify their reactions with the help of a practitioner.

Fotuhi and his colleagues tallied the effects in the *Journal of Prevention of Alzheimer's Disease*. Of 127 older patients with mild cognitive impairment, 84% showed significant improvement in at least three areas of cognitive function. Of the 17 who had an MRI both before and after the study, eight had some shrinking or no growth in the hippocampus, but nine saw theirs grow by at least 1%. Fotuhi says he's taking his program nationwide.

It is still too early to know if interventions like these prevent Alzheimer's disease in the long run. "The frustrating part to me is we have a lot of treatable conditions in our patients and we're just focusing on the nontreatable part of their pathology," Fotuhi says. "We need to change the conversation to be about what causes better or worse brain health."

The fact that we can't yet treat it is only one frustrating part of the disease. Just knowing what it is remains another challenge: a March analysis of data from two long-term brain-autopsy studies revealed that what doctors diagnose as Alzheimer's disease in life looks a lot less obvious in the brain after death. Few people died with brain lesions indicative of pure Alzheimer's—suggesting that what we presume to be Alzheimer's may not, in fact, be Alzheimer's at all but rather a combination of several additional diseases experts know little about.

"It's like being stuck with cancer but not being able to tell whether it's liver cancer or pancreatic cancer," says White, who was an author of the *Hypertension* study. At this stage, it's proving difficult for researchers to figure out how many additional brain diseases there may be as well as how to treat them.

But the good news is that there is at least a suggested path. "My prediction is that one day, hopefully, Alzheimer's will be handled like cardiovascular disease," says UCSF researcher Yaffe, "with a combination of drugs and lifestyle factors." ◻

OFF-KEY, BUT ON POINT

Meryl Streep shows the power of a middle-aged dreamer in Stephen Frears' *Florence Foster Jenkins*

By Sam Lansky

"DO YOU EVER WATCH THE CLASSIC-MOVIE CHANnels?" Meryl Streep asks. "Sometimes I do, and I realize how different they are from many films now. They're like the great novelistic things that are on TV now. Film has decided it's only going to concern itself with one specific kind of sensate experience. TV has scenes. TV is stylistically adventurous in the way that films *were*."

You know cinema is on the decline when an actor as legendary as Streep, 67, who has earned 19 Academy Award nominations over a career spanning four decades, is fantasizing about doing television. But for viewers who share her nostalgia for an era of moviemaking that seems to be disappearing, Streep's new film, *Florence Foster Jenkins,* in theaters Aug. 12, should provide relief—at least until the perfect TV project for her materializes.

The film, directed by veteran English filmmaker Stephen Frears, tells the wild true story of its title character, a New York socialite (Streep) who dreamed of becoming an opera singer, even though she sang terribly. Her husband St. Clair Bayfield (Hugh Grant) kept her insulated from the reality of her lack of talent, bribing critics to favorably review the intimate concerts

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELE ASSELIN FOR TIME

"He's such a good reader of the scene. It's something precious," Streep says of Frears

she gave at Manhattan nightclubs, caterwauling in over-the-top costumes. But her genuine passion for music led her all the way to a performance at Carnegie Hall—accompanied by her pianist, Cosme McMoon (Simon Helberg)—and earned her a cult following of ironic devotees.

It's an absurd premise—stranger than fiction—but Streep refuses to caricature Jenkins, imbuing her with great heart. As portrayed in the film, Jenkins' relationship with her husband is heartbreakingly tender and her enthusiasm for something for which she has no aptitude is inspiring to witness. She may be a joke to the public, but to the viewer she's a hero.

The film marks another success for Frears, who has helmed a string of well-received biopics about women in their latter years, like *The Queen,* starring Helen Mirren, and *Philomena,* with Judi Dench. But he says there was no great strategy in wanting to spotlight a figure who, unlike some of his other subjects, could easily be lost to history. "I just thought, This is a really good script," Frears says. "I listened to the singing, and it made me laugh, and it touched me."

"That's the confidence of a long career," Streep says. "You don't have to cogitate on material." And though there's been a recent boom of films about the emotional lives of older women—from last year's *I'll See You in My Dreams,* starring Blythe Danner, to this spring's *Hello, My Name Is Doris,* which earned Sally Field widespread acclaim—Streep says *Florence* transcends demographics. "I want to know when we decided it was O.K. to categorize ourselves into little boxes," she says. "The best things are about everything. This isn't about an older woman—this is about everything. Stories are stories."

MOVIE STILL: PARAMOUNT; JENKINS: GETTY IMAGES

IT'S TEMPTING to draw a parallel between the tale of Jenkins, who enchanted the public with her delightfully awful singing during the tumult of World War II, and this film, executed with an endearingly light touch and released in the midst of a bleak news cycle. "What an antidote Florence is!" Streep says. "What a tonic. In dark days, we need it."

Though she's never been cagey about her views, Streep has largely kept out of politics over the course of her storied career. But she came out to support Hillary Clinton in a highly visible appearance at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia on July 26, delivering a rousing speech in a dress that bore the pattern of the American flag. There she declared that Clinton would be the first female President but not the last.

Streep says it was an important moment both for her and for the nation. "Since she was very young, Hillary's had a commitment to working on behalf of disenfranchised people," she says. "It's unheralded, uncelebrated, unknown mostly. What's known about her is the result of millions of dollars dedicated to bringing her down and wounding her."

'THIS ISN'T ABOUT AN OLDER WOMAN—THIS IS ABOUT EVERYTHING.'

Yet she doesn't rail against Trump supporters. "I think you have to listen to the people who are deeply unhappy," she says. "You have to find the sources of it and not overreact to the craziness in it." She cites the woes of a declining middle class: "The conversation has to address the feeling of uselessness and despair and marginalization on the part of people who were never rich but had a job they could count on. Now they can't, for several generations now. There's meth and opioids. There's real despair. That's part of inclusivity as well."

Frears compares the discontent that has buoyed Trump's campaign to the political climate in the U.K. that precipitated Brexit. "Globalization is a complicated thing," he says. "Exploitation by demagogues is depressing and unhelpful. In the end, you know where the disappointment will land."

Streep says she worked with a vocal coach to nail Jenkins' piercing, off-key style: "I had to learn nine arias!"

"It's amazing how easily people are led to fury and chaos," Streep says. "Unhappy people with guns are not going to make this country great."

Between the press of events and a fall slate crowded with oppressively serious prestige films, *Florence* does feel like a rare thing—a grownup bit of popcorn entertainment with heart. "You hope this will give pleasure to people," Frears says. "In the Depression, people wanted to see Fred Astaire movies."

"That's a high calling," Streep says with a sigh. "There's only so much despair you can take."

WHILE STREEP INSISTS there's work to be done in the political sphere, she also remains passionate about issues affecting her peers in the industry. Hollywood's gender wage gap has attracted much attention in the past several years, with actors like Jennifer Lawrence advocating equal pay for male and female performers. It's a good thing, Streep says, that the conversation is getting louder. "It's not being held by women!" she says. "Men are ashamed that they're getting that money. It used to be, everybody didn't say anything about it so it was kind of fine. Now they're a little more nervous that somebody will find out what they make vis-à-vis their co-star. That's the best vigilance: the vigilance of privilege. People will always be battling and whining about it. When the other side says, 'You know, I think that sucks,' that's great."

"I work with Helen and Judi and Meryl—I'm in the clear," Frears jokes. "I'm a saint."

While neither Streep nor Frears would want to turn back the clock on progress, both yearn for a time when entertainment was almost always tinged with glamour and people cared passionately. "Remember films used to be like this [one]?" Frears muses. "I always wanted to make a movie where men wore tuxedos and women wore evening gowns."

Streep pretends to pull out a phone and stare at the screen. "Now everyone sees films like this," she says. "I see them on the plane. The cinematographer—all the attention to detail, all the overweening thought that goes into each shot—and it looks like this!" She mimes looking at a phone again. "Then they pause it. Then they say, 'How's the chicken?' Then they come back, and they pick it up again."

A film like *Florence Foster Jenkins,* with its rare blend of A-list performers and tonal levity, should be experienced the old-fashioned way, says Streep. "Size matters," she says. "When you go to the movie theater, there's something great about it." Seeing it with other people also makes it, quite simply, funnier. "Here's the laugh you get when you watch a comedy by yourself," she says, releasing a halfhearted guffaw. "The saddest sound in the world."

Just as with Jenkins—who, for the record, wound up selling out Carnegie Hall—there's a greater good to be found in the communal experience, whatever the era. "To go and see something in a full theater of people!" Streep says, delighted. "That's just wonderful." □

'Mrs. Jenkins went bravely on'

From a 1934 TIME review of Florence Foster Jenkins in concert:

MRS. JENKINS APPEARED IN flame-colored velvet, with yellow ringlets piled high on her head. For a starter she picked Brahms' *Die Mainacht,* subtitled on her gilt program as "O singer, if thou canst not dream, leave this song unsung." Mrs. Jenkins could dream if she could not sing. With her hands clasped to her heart she passed on to *Vergebliches Ständchen,* which she had labeled "The Serenade in Vain."

The audience, as Mrs. Jenkins' audiences invariably do, behaved very badly. In the back of the hall, men and women in full evening dress made no attempt to control their laughter. Dignified gentlemen sat with handkerchiefs stuffed in their mouths and tears of mirth streaming down their cheeks. But Mrs. Jenkins went bravely on. For a Spanish group she wore a mantilla, carried a big feather fan, undertook a few little dancing steps to convey more spirit. While she was getting her breath, the Pascarella chamber group played Dvorak's Quintet and cameramen photographed the happy laughing faces in the audience.

Mrs. Jenkins' voice was a little tired but back she came in blue & cream satin, a rhinestone stomacher and a rhinestone tiara. Cinemen turned their cameras on her while she struggled with the *Vissi d'Arte* from *Tosca.* Last year she sang a flower song while tossing roses into the audience. In her excitement the basket slipped from her hand, hit an old gentleman on the head. Last week she repeated the flower song, pleased her friends by again hurling the basket.

Jenkins, in the 1920s

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Time Off

'IN THE END WE PUT OUR FAITH, OUT OF NECESSITY, IN HEROES WHO ARE DIFFICULT TO DEEM HEROIC.' —PAGE 52

Athie, left, and Moore capture the ecstatic mix of turntables, rhymes, dance and art, but the feeling doesn't last

DAVID LEE—NETFLIX

STREAMING

Even with Baz Luhrmann behind it, *The Get Down* misses too many beats

By Daniel D'Addario

THE GET DOWN, NETFLIX'S NEW series about the birth of hip-hop, has an unlikely lead character, one who feels things too deeply to speak up. Besieged by the decay of 1977 New York City as envisioned by co-creators Baz Luhrmann and Stephen Adly Guirgis, high schooler Ezekiel (Justice Smith) has withdrawn into himself. The private poems he writes help him grieve the death of his parents, both killed by gun violence. "Take a look around," his teacher tells him after he refuses to read his work aloud. "The Bronx is a war zone. Our community is dying, and it's going to take leaders to save it. That means you."

But Ezekiel, called Books by friends, needs the motivation that comes from a beat behind him. His rendezvous with a gifted graffiti tagger named Shaolin Fantastic (Shameik Moore) and then with a young DJ known as Grandmaster Flash (Mamoudou Athie) provide him the opportunity to pair his rhymes with music. Together, they pioneer in the nascent genre of hip-hop and find themselves exploring both the city and their own talents.

Add in a sweet romance between Ezekiel and aspiring disco singer Mylene (Herizen Guardiola) and you have enough story for a show—at least for the six episodes Netflix will issue on Aug. 12. (More episodes are due in 2017.) But *The Get Down,* like a verse crammed with three too many syllables, seems not to have been subjected to editing. It offers some of the more transcendent moments in recent TV memory, but to reach them viewers must slog through some of

the dullest. Subsequent episodes are tighter, but the 90-minute running time of the pilot, which indulges itself in meandering explorations of several blind alleys, should nonetheless be regarded as a harbinger.

For instance, Mylene's breaking into triumphant, sacrilegious song at her church is sensational, but it is preceded and followed by endless scene setting involving her devout, uninterestingly mean father (Giancarlo Esposito, given nothing to do). And a political boss (Jimmy Smits) wheedling favors out of the Ed Koch mayoral campaign feels like a character on an even slower show. By the time *The Get Down* reaches a moment of meaningful triumph for Books and Shaolin, the audience is rooting for them to succeed, both because we care about them and simply so that we can wrap up this opening act.

AS A FILM DIRECTOR, Luhrmann is a poet of bigness, but his impulse to concoct an overwhelming canvas works against him here. His movies skitter (often brilliantly) among radically different tones, with a voracious appetite for more being the only common thread. From *Romeo + Juliet* and *Moulin Rouge* to the recent *Great Gatsby,* there's no source material or period in history onto which the Australian auteur can't successfully finger-paint emotionality. But in the more intimate medium of TV, *The Get Down*'s grand moments aren't enough to distract from the drudgery around them. And when risky scenes miss the mark—like *Hamilton* star Daveed Diggs, as a grownup Books on the verge of stardom, lip-synching to the rhymes of real-life rap legend Nas—they feel unforgivably garish. When the magnetic young stars are offscreen, their absence looms.

This is Luhrmann at his best and worst, and he seemed to have found the right home with Netflix. The home-video and streaming service has a freewheeling rapport with show runners, resulting in unlikely successes like *Orange Is the New Black* and *House of Cards,* whose unorthodox premises, so new when they premiered, gave way, eventually, to consistency and familiarity. But *The Get Down* is different. Whether soaring in song or mired in minute 77 of 90, it's impossible to imagine Luhrmann's careening hip-hop opera ever coming to feel like a show one could use for a chilled-out binge session.

Nor does it fit into the nostalgia craze animating other series. *Vinyl,* HBO's disappointing series about a 1970s rock label, wanted to make sure the viewer understood that the music it portrayed was important. Netflix's *Stranger Things,* paying homage to 1980s sci-fi, is rigorous in its small details and story beats. There's nothing so would-be edifying or so worked over in *The Get Down*. It may have enlisted the icons Grandmaster Flash and Nas as creative guides, but it feels less like an argument for early hip-hop's greatness than a bold repurposing of the genre to tell an archetypal, bighearted story of love and growing up. Hip-hop purists will surely reject the show's approach to the most significant music genre of our time, relegated to a jumping-off point for melodrama.

> It feels less like an argument for early hip-hop's greatness than a bold repurposing of the genre to tell an archetypal, bighearted story of love and growing up

The show's best scene comes when Ezekiel and Mylene bond during the notorious 1977 blackout. One of the most infamous incidents in Big Apple history gave rise to arson and lootings, but the tumult is reduced to a gritty backdrop for two teenagers exploring what love might mean for them. With a palette suited for little more and nothing less than depicting the bold emotions of teenagers, *The Get Down* isn't deft enough to do justice to epochal shifts in the culture. Some things—the political clashes and urban hazards that define a city—are too big, or too rooted in places other than passionate emotion, for Luhrmann to handle. In this moment, blessedly, they're all background noise, and a melody is allowed to break out. ◻

TIME PICKS

DIGITAL SERIES
In their new show ***Take My Wife,*** premiering Aug. 11 on the streaming service Seeso, newlywed comics Cameron Esposito and Rhea Butcher reflect on being gay and female in the comedy world.

MUSIC
Country legend **Dolly Parton's** 43rd studio album, *Pure & Simple* (Aug. 19), is a collection of love songs inspired by her 50-year marriage, accompanied by a second disc of her greatest hits.

BOOKS
Comedian Amy Schumer's book of personal essays, ***The Girl With the Lower Back Tattoo*** (Aug. 16), mines her experiences in love, lust and Cross-Fit for humor.

MOVIES
In the coming-of-age tale ***Morris From America*** (Aug. 19), a black teenager adjusts to his new life in a mostly white German town by seeking refuge in rap music.

THIS PAGE: PARTON: GETTY IMAGES; MORRIS FROM AMERICA: A24 FILMS; OPPOSITE PAGE: NO MAN'S SKY—HELLO GAMES

A sampling of No Man's Sky's *algorithmically generated aliens*

VIDEO GAMES

An unlimited digital universe with wonder to spare

By Matt Peckham

I'M CRUISING THROUGH AN AMARANTH-TINGED VACUUM in a dangerously vulnerable starship. Asteroids phase in and out of view, each a mineral mass my photon cannons can mine for fuel. In the distance, a distress signal beckons from one of the nearly unlimited number of planets I can visit if I choose to. I'm lost in space, and I feel fine.

This is *No Man's Sky,* an absurdly ambitious sci-fi experiment out now for PlayStation 4 and PC. One of the year's most eagerly awaited games is, unlike most megahits nowadays, the product of a handful of programmers led by creator Sean Murray at a tiny Guildford, England, studio named Hello Games. Since it was first announced three years ago, *No Man's Sky* has earned legions of fans as well as doubters who wondered if the game could possibly deliver on its promise to let players loose in a digital universe bigger than the Milky Way and populated by alien life-forms to study, exploit or destroy.

Murray is a lanky 30-something who favors rumpled button-ups and sports a thick beard. His laid-back demeanor belies an intellectual intensity that has earned him a cult following online. "I'm really enamored with the idea of players' being able to express themselves in games," he says. Murray argues that most contemporary blockbusters eschew this in favor of too-linear game play and theatrical action.

That's why *No Man's Sky* is built upon real-world equations for describing natural objects. Instead of handcrafting every planet, moon and star, Hello Games inserts formulas that tell an algorithm what planets, moons and stars should look like and how they ought to behave. Same goes for the alien flora and fauna you'll find there. In mathematics, the process is called "procedural generation." It's essentially a way to get massive output (a universe) from relatively minor input (some numbers). As a result, *No Man's Sky* is populated by over 18 quintillion—that's 18 followed by as many zeros—unique planets. Even if a player could visit one every second (and travel between them instantly), seeing the entire game would take nearly 585 billion real-life years.

PLANETS IN THE MILKY WAY:
100,000,000,000

PLANETS IN *NO MAN'S SKY*:
18,446,744,073,709,551,616

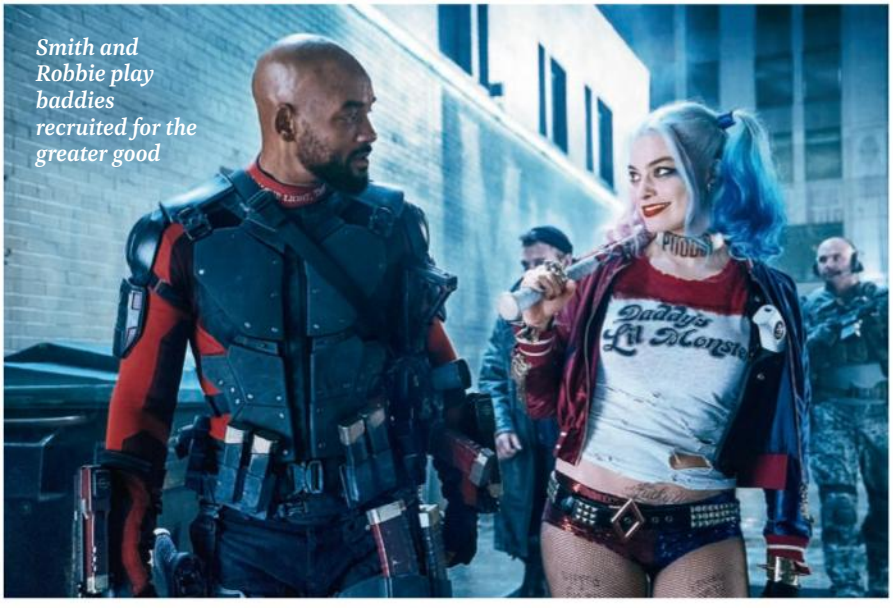
Players start on a random planet beside a crashed spaceship and must first learn to survive. To get the ship working, you have to probe for resources using a jet pack and a "multi-tool"—a sort of space-age Swiss Army knife that doubles as a weapon. Repair your ship by alchemizing the right materials and you can lift off into space, all of which is seamless, since there are no loading screens of any kind in *No Man's Sky.* From orbit, you can leap to other planets or dock at space stations to trade with other species. Or become a space pirate. Or fashion yourself as an intergalactic Claude Lévi-Strauss. It's a cosmic carte blanche.

Ultimately, playing the game engenders old-school optimism. Where contemporary science fiction seems mired in dystopian visions of the future, *No Man's Sky* produces something akin to the giddy awe of 1960s pulp magazines. This is by design: *No Man's Sky* is a challenge from Murray to a games industry that has grown rich and complacent by aping Hollywood's preferred themes and penchant for franchise sequels. While its scope is the headline attraction, *No Man's Sky*'s real triumph is the way it manages to gin up limitless wonder. ◻

MOVIES

Suicide Squad asks us to choose: evil or extinction

By Eliza Berman



Smith and Robbie play baddies recruited for the greater good

SPOILER ALERT: SUPERMAN IS DEAD. Or at least he appeared to be at the end of *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice,* the March blockbuster that took in $873 million worldwide. So with the Man of Steel out of the way in *Suicide Squad,* the latest installment from the DC Comics world, the U.S. government ponders how to protect the planet without Clark Kent's alter ego. Its best idea: turn the world's most heinous villains into a new crop of superheroes. Superman may not be officially kaput—after all, he'll appear in next year's *Justice League* movie—but there's symbolic meaning in his presumed death: in today's blockbusters, the promise of good guys is a thing of the past.

Directed by David Ayer, *Suicide Squad* convenes a motley crew of miscreants from DC's back pages, including psychotic psychiatrist Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie), sharp-shooting hitman Deadshot (Will Smith) and pyromaniacal ex–gang member Diablo (Jay Hernandez). They're part of a scheme dreamed up by a government official (Viola Davis) to leverage evil for the greater good. And while *Suicide Squad,* which opened on Aug. 5, may not be a perfect movie—indeed, the vast majority of reviewers derided it—it's nothing if not reflective of our times.

Suicide Squad feels like the coda to a movement among recent comic-book movies, in which heroes increasingly present themselves as antiheroes. Earlier this year, *Captain America: Civil War* and *Batman v Superman* tried to negotiate just how much latitude our heroes should have in tackling crime. The year's most lucrative new antihero, Deadpool, is a foulmouthed wisecracker who hurls playground taunts as he dispatches bullets. Even Captain America, that most wholesome and vanilla of crusaders, turns out to be a Nazi sympathizer (at least in the comic books). With *Suicide Squad,* the pendulum has swung so far that our heroes are straight-up villains.

The world in which Harley Quinn and Deadshot get to be saviors is one in which leaders like Davis' Amanda Waller are as ethically compromised as the villains they recruit. The unanticipated side effect of forming a band of baddies to protect us from metahuman terrorists is that we wind up unleashing a real monster where once there was merely a theoretical one. The metaterrorists are faceless, rapidly proliferating and appearing from nowhere on U.S. soil to take the lives of innocent civilians. In the end we put our faith, out of necessity, in heroes who are difficult to deem heroic.

Is any of this sounding familiar? In the real world, news junkies debate whether 2016 is the worst year ever. (For what it's worth, historians say 1348 was much worse, not to mention the first half of the 1940s.) But between global terrorist attacks, ongoing racial strife and an election season that continues to highlight the fault lines in our culture, Americans are disillusioned. Many voters feel they are compromising their ideals by supporting candidates they can't fully trust, forced to choose the lesser of two evils and set aside uncomfortable truths. It can be tempting to want to avoid the news altogether.

> 'All this good vs. evil sh-t is kind of played out right now. It's time for bad vs. evil.'
>
> **DAVID AYER**, director of *Suicide Squad,* speaking at a Warner Bros. presentation at San Diego Comic-Con in July

So why spend $14 at the movies if the big picture stirs up the same kind of existential anxieties one can get for free by glancing at CNN or Fox News? Critics will tell you to stay home not because *Suicide Squad* is bleak, but because the plot is incoherent, the violence fetishized and the characters one-dimensional. But as the movie's record-breaking opening box-office take confirms, there's something about this reflection of dark times that audiences demand to witness onscreen. (And it takes more than just diehard fans to accomplish a $267 million haul.)

This nihilistic-superhero streak may be unsustainable, which is a bet Marvel is making with a 2017 slate that includes *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*'s dancing botanical baby Groot and a bushy-tailed teen Spider-Man in *Homecoming.* Will good ultimately prevail onscreen? The answer depends on whether moviegoers choose to spend their money to see their reality reflected back to them or to try, if only for a couple of hours, to escape it. □

CLAY ENOS—WARNER BROS.

Elliot the dragon is a stunning CGI creation

MOVIES

Pete's Dragon soars before it stumbles

DISNEY HAS A LONG HISTORY OF TERRIFYING children—especially when it comes to moms: Bambi's is killed by hunters, Dumbo's is captured and can comfort him only through the bars of a circus cart. Youthful reactions to these scenes range from stoic to sobbing, and adults who grew up with these movies know just which kind of kid they were.

Pete's Dragon, a retooling of Disney's 1977 movie of the same name, has been made with care by director David Lowery yet traffics in similar emotional extremes. Set in a dreamy Pacific Northwest, it has a distinct hippie-folktale aesthetic, riffing on the idea that the natural world holds breathtaking secrets if we just know where to look. By itself that idea is wonderful, and the CGI dragon Elliot—an expressive, furry green beauty—lives up to its promise. To watch him soar above a misty ocean of trees—with or without young Pete (Oakes Fegley)—is to feel lilting, airborne freedom.

With Elliot's help, newly orphaned Pete lives in a forest for six years. But when Pete rejoins the human world, Elliot suffers, especially when men discover his whereabouts. This is where Lowery stumbles, working too hard to squeeze a response from us. A protracted dragon-capture sequence is grim and swollen with syrupy music to cue us when to feel. It all turns out O.K., but to see Elliot in peril is unsettling. Or at least it was for me—which tells you which kind of kid I was.

—STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

QUICK TALK

Chris Pine

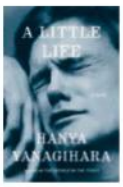
Fresh off his turn as Captain Kirk in Star Trek Beyond, *Pine, 35, stars in* Hell or High Water, *a neo-western heist drama in which two brothers steal from a chain of Texas banks to save their family ranch.*

What resonated with you about your character, Toby? The script was like beautiful cowboy poetry about men who were incapable of articulating what they were feeling. The deepest chord Toby struck with me was this quiet terseness, a guy who didn't use words to express what he was about. He had bottled up a lot of things, and you could see what it had done to his body and face. He reminded me of a dirt-caked landscape.

Playing the strong, silent type must be a very different kind of acting challenge from, say, playing the more outspoken Captain Kirk. In an action film like *Star Trek,* a lot of the scenes are eight pages of shouting, "Come on, let's go!" and "Turn left!" This narrative is a different beast. I usually play people who fight with their words more than their fists, and I appreciated a different version of masculinity to embody.

Does Toby see these heists, which happen at the peak of the Great Recession, as a Robin Hood endeavor? This is a man who is desperate, and this is the only thing he can think of. He's like an animal pushed into a corner, and what is that animal going to do? It's going to fight for survival. This is not a morality tale or a crusade for Toby. This is a sheer act of animal survival.

Next year you'll appear in *Wonder Woman*. Did you feel like a third wheel in a female-driven superhero movie? I'm sure a lot will be made of how it fits into the zeitgeist of female empowerment—it's high time for that wave to come in. But just because it happened to be two women in the leading roles didn't mean anything to me, other than the fact that I enjoyed them as human beings and they were talented filmmakers. —E.B.



ON MY RADAR

HANYA YANAGIHARA'S *A LITTLE LIFE*

'It isn't all that uplifting, but it's beautifully written. Anything to get away from the horror which is the election of 2016.'

PETE'S DRAGON: WALT DISNEY; PINE: JASON KEMPIN—GETTY IMAGES

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Whitehead with Winfrey at her home in May; The Underground Railroad *is her new book-club pick*

ROB HOWARD—O, THE OPRAH MAGAZINE

FICTION

To understand America, you have to ride the *Railroad*

By Radhika Jones

THE MAGIC AFOOT IN COLSON WHITEHEAD'S NEW NOVEL shows itself some 60 pages in, when runaway slaves Cora and Caesar, under the protection of a Georgia abolitionist, descend into what they think is a cellar but is actually a subterranean platform: "Two steel rails ran the visible length of the tunnel, pinned into the dirt by wooden cross-ties. The steel ran south and north presumably, springing from some inconceivable source and shooting toward a miraculous terminus." The Underground Railroad is real. When the astonished fugitives ask, "Who built it?" they're met with a wry response: "Who builds anything in this country?" It is a thing to marvel at—the idea of slaves toiling in secret, making something whose purpose is to set them free.

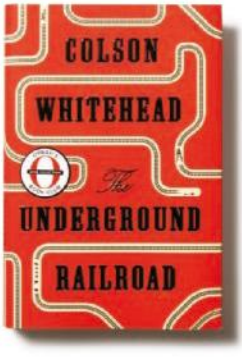
The Underground Railroad perfectly balances the realism of its subject with fabulist touches that render it freshly illuminating. Whitehead's rails carry Cora not just from state to state but also through time, opening multiple chapters of black life in America. It's gracefully done: you might not notice the quantum leap that places Cora in a hospital where black men are unwitting participants in experiments involving syphilis that began in the 1930s. What you do notice, whatever the era, are black bodies scarred and destroyed on the orders of white men. What you do notice is the precarious status of black lives, the negation of their worth.

The constant is Cora, pilgrim of America's dark heart. Driven by anger at her mother, who ran from the plantation when Cora was a child, Cora doesn't waste time imagining the railroad's miraculous terminus. Her revenge is survival, her mere existence a daily rebuke to the system and to the slave catcher Arnold Ridgeway, whose failure to find the mother only doubles his effort to find the daughter.

But if Cora is the hunted, she also learns some hunter's tricks. In South Carolina, she gets a job at the Museum of Natural Wonders, playing a live mannequin in dioramas of African and slave life. After several weeks of performing for white spectators, she happens on the satisfying reversal of staring back:

She got good at her evil eye. Looking up from the slave wheel or the hut's glass fire to pin a person in place like one of the beetles or mites in the insect exhibits. They always broke, the people, not expecting this weird attack, staggering back or looking at the floor or forcing their companions to pull them away. It was a fine lesson, Cora thought, to learn that the slave, the African in your midst, is looking at you, too.

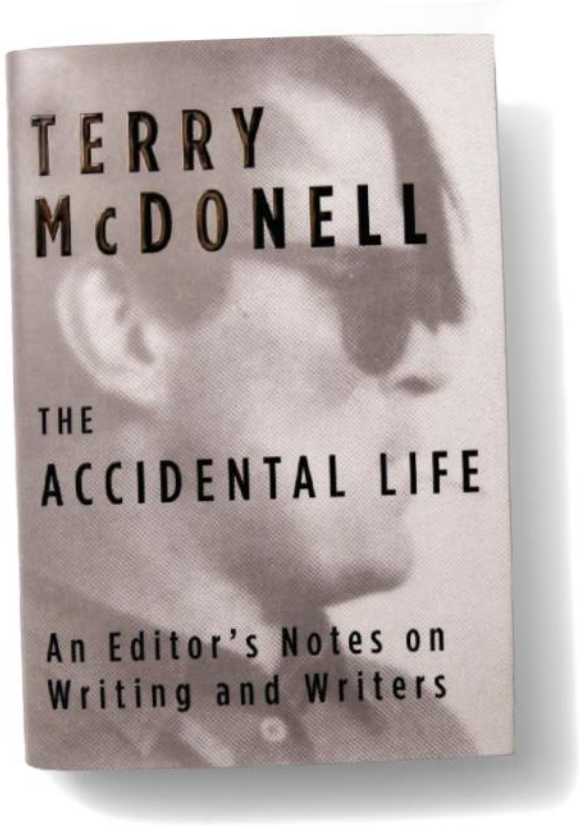
On Aug. 2, Oprah Winfrey announced *The Underground Railroad* as her latest book-club pick. It may be her most consequential, as the tenure of the first black U.S. President draws to a close in an atmosphere rooted in the persistent inequities of centuries past. The novel's first chapter describes the many times Cora's grandmother Ajarry changes hands, from her capture in Africa to her death on a Georgia plantation. "Know your value and you know your place in the order," the narrator writes. Ajarry learns her place. In her fight for freedom, Cora learns to defy it. ◻



ON THE RIGHT TRACK
This is Whitehead's sixth novel; he won a MacArthur "genius" grant after publishing his first two books, *The Intuitionist* and *John Henry Days*

MEMOIR

Legends live on in an editor's book



WRITERS CAN TAKE ON A MYTHIC quality: solitary figures who conjure imaginary worlds and see more than the rest of us in the world we share. And the best of them, especially those who put themselves in their stories, create characters out of their lives, from demigod-druggies (Hunter S. Thompson) and globe-trotting gourmands (Jim Harrison) to "pants-down Republicans" (P.J. O'Rourke). In *The Accidental Life,* the new memoir by Terry McDonell, the former editor of *Sports Illustrated* and *Esquire* (among 11 other publications), some of the most colorful literary titans to ever walk this earth indeed live up to their legends.

The Accidental Life serves chapterized personal tales of McDonell's friendships with these writers in the years when a certain type of literary machismo ruled all—there is shotgun-punctuated and acid-tinged twilight golf with Thompson and George Plimpton, a difficult dinner with Kurt Vonnegut and William Vollmann's prostitute expense account for *Esquire.* Creative types like Steve Jobs, Jack Nicholson and Bill Murray also make cameos.

But the gold in McDonell's book is the lessons he took from these writers, beyond the bravado and antics that often characterized their work, about how to perceive the world. Like how deforestation of the wilderness constitutes the destruction of American identity itself; that nervousness is "the sweat of perfection"; that "it's better to spend money like there's no tomorrow than to spend tonight like there's no money"; and that "most adults don't want to learn anything; they only want to seem to want to learn, and be diverted a moment from their usual rounds." McDonell makes it clear that it is the noble work of those who write or edit to rebel against that last deception. They lived unique lives to hunt new meanings. McDonell's book is a guide.

When one of McDonell's titans dies, he ends the chapter with an anecdote or detail that shows that writer's lasting vitality. But the book could be read as a lament for the passing of something larger: while the world still contains magic and writers are still here to capture it, the publishing business has shifted. McDonell saw from the inside how the value of his heroes' work depreciated over time. He reports on engineers taking pride in "algorithms becoming the epic poems of journalism" and notes that there's little alchemy in modern budget reviews, even after trimming the indulgences. The result is that today, the wisdom seekers—through writing, editing, living—often can no longer afford to search.

—NATE HOPPER

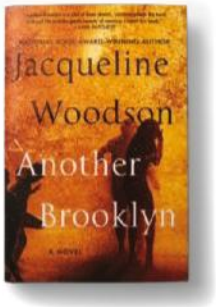
McDonell edited Sports Illustrated *from 2002 to 2012*

NOVELLA

A girl grows in Brooklyn

JACQUELINE WOODSON HAS built a career writing books for adolescent readers, like her 2014 memoir in verse, *Brown Girl Dreaming*, which won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature. Her new book is a coming-of-age novel made for adults. Melancholy but not maudlin, *Another Brooklyn* tells the story of August, a black girl growing up in 1970s Bushwick with an absentee mother, a father drawn to the Nation of Islam, and three best friends. Together the foursome try to convince one another that they are special, while navigating a neighborhood that threatens them with everything from dope fiends to abusive relatives to rapists lurking in stairwells. Woodson's unsparing story of a girl becoming a woman recalls some of the genre's all-time greats: *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, The Bluest Eye* and especially, with its darkly poetic language, *The House on Mango Street.* And any adult who's reflected on childhood pain will relate to August and her friends "trying to dream themselves out. As though there was someplace other than this place. As though there was another Brooklyn."

—SARAH BEGLEY



MCDONELL: TANA LEE ALVES—GETTY IMAGES

Mariah Carey hilariously insisted that **her upcoming E! project is a "docuseries,"** not a reality show:

'I don't watch reality … I don't even know what reality is.'

An extremely rare litter of **white lion cubs** was born at the Tbilisi Zoological Park in Georgia.

ABC Entertainment president Channing Dungey revealed that the network is talking to Lucasfilm about **developing a *Star Wars* TV show**—but "it's all a little bit hush-hush" right now.

Vice President Joe Biden wished President Obama a happy birthday by **tweeting this BFF-worthy photo.**

A Pennsylvania Uber driver **will travel to Rio to watch his son compete in the Olympics,** thanks to a GoFundMe campaign started by a passenger.

Ohio's Xavier University welcomed **America's first "pizza ATM,"** which will serve hot pies 24 hours a day.

LOVE IT / LEAVE IT

***TIME*'S WEEKLY TAKE ON WHAT POPPED IN CULTURE**

An Atlanta-area man was **arrested for getting violent** after his wife made him a grilled cheese with too much cheese; apparently she put in three slices, and he wanted only two.

Kim Kardashian took to Twitter **to mourn her broken Blackberry Bold:**

'Reality is starting to set in and I'm getting sad.'

A Budweiser truck crashed in Brooklyn, **spilling out hundreds of cans of beer** over an expressway—a "Bud-geyser," as one local put it.

Jared Leto's *Suicide Squad* premiere outfit **was widely mocked on Twitter;** one user said he looked like a watermelon.

Olympic gymnast Kohei Uchimura **racked up a $5,000 cell-phone bill** by playing *Pokémon Go* in Brazil.

What had been reported to be a man with a gun in Toronto **turned out to be a cardboard cutout** of Arnold Schwarzenegger's character from *Terminator,* according to police.

LION CUBS: TBILISI ZOO; BIDEN: TWITTER; PIZZA ATM: INSTAGRAM; BLACKBERRY BOLD: BLACKBERRY; SCHWARZENEGGER: EVERETT; BUDWEISER TRUCK: NY1; POKÉMON: NINTENDO; CAREY, STAR WARS, HILL, KARDASHIAN, UCHIMURA, LETO, WATERMELON, GRILLED CHEESE: GETTY IMAGES

By Raisa Bruner, Cady Lang and Megan McCluskey

Dear Mr. Putin: Here's why you should help save my beloved BlackBerry

By Kristin van Ogtrop

PERHAPS IT'S TOO MUCH TO ASK, BUT I'M HOPING THAT somehow, some way, the Russians can save my BlackBerry.

I've been trying to follow this summer's email-hacking stories, which seem to have as many twists as Debbie Wasserman Schultz's hair. But I keep getting distracted by grief. You see, I'm mourning the impending demise of the traditional BlackBerry, which has been my friend, my confidante, my loyal servant and—most important—my reliable email provider since George W. ran our country. I love my BlackBerry the way Vladimir Putin no doubt loves his role in this nutty U.S. election. That is: mysteriously, gleefully, boundlessly.

When BlackBerry announced in July that it would soon discontinue the Classic model, known for its iconic raised keyboard, I had to leave work and go straight to the nearest bar. I'm not quite sure what transpired, but when I woke up the next day, I was missing my watch, wedding ring and wallet, but my BlackBerry was still in my hand. Because who wants a BlackBerry? Oh, right. I do.

SURE, THINGS HAVE GOTTEN AWKWARD. I have become such a mobile-device conversation piece, such a weird almost-throwback, that when I pull my BlackBerry out on the subway, people look at me like I'm wearing pantaloons. Recently I was in a work meeting, and a colleague fake-whispered to everyone around us, "Kristin … still … has … a … BlackBerry." All eyes turned to me with a look that said, Oh, you poor, poor pantaloon-wearing thing. Someone should call for help.

There is a reason you can Google "text message mistakes" and get a gazillion results, each more hilarious than the next. Two words: *flat keyboard.* When the magnanimous side of my brain is feeling particularly shocked about some of Donald Trump's tweets, those are the words I repeat to myself: *flat keyboard.* He can't really mean those unhinged things he types. Maybe he just has thick fingers and a disabled auto-correct. Not that auto-correct necessarily does the trick: when my kids are bored and stuck in my presence, they sidle up to watch me text on my iPhone (yes, I have one of those too—don't ask), because I need to go back and correct every third word. It's like going to the Mom Circus. The greatest show on earth. To which I say: Hey kids, see all those people walking down the street, bumping into each other, random trees and light posts while attempting to text and walk? If they had BlackBerrys, they could type without looking! And no, that's not bragging. Simply a statement of fact.

Where does Russia come in? Turns out the Russians are wearing pantaloons too. Because no one sends email anymore!

At least no one under age 35, and those are the people who will be running the world before Putin and I even have time to master the flat keyboard. Based on the behavior of my two college-age children, the chance of their reading emails from me hovers well below the approval ratings of both presidential candidates: that is, far less than 50%. (Remember when people said you must choose your words in email as carefully as if 1,000 people would read it? These days you are lucky to get one person.) And so, my Russian friends, in case you're wondering why the news of your alleged hacking of that dying form of communication quickly pivoted to Trump's bone spurs, well, that's why.

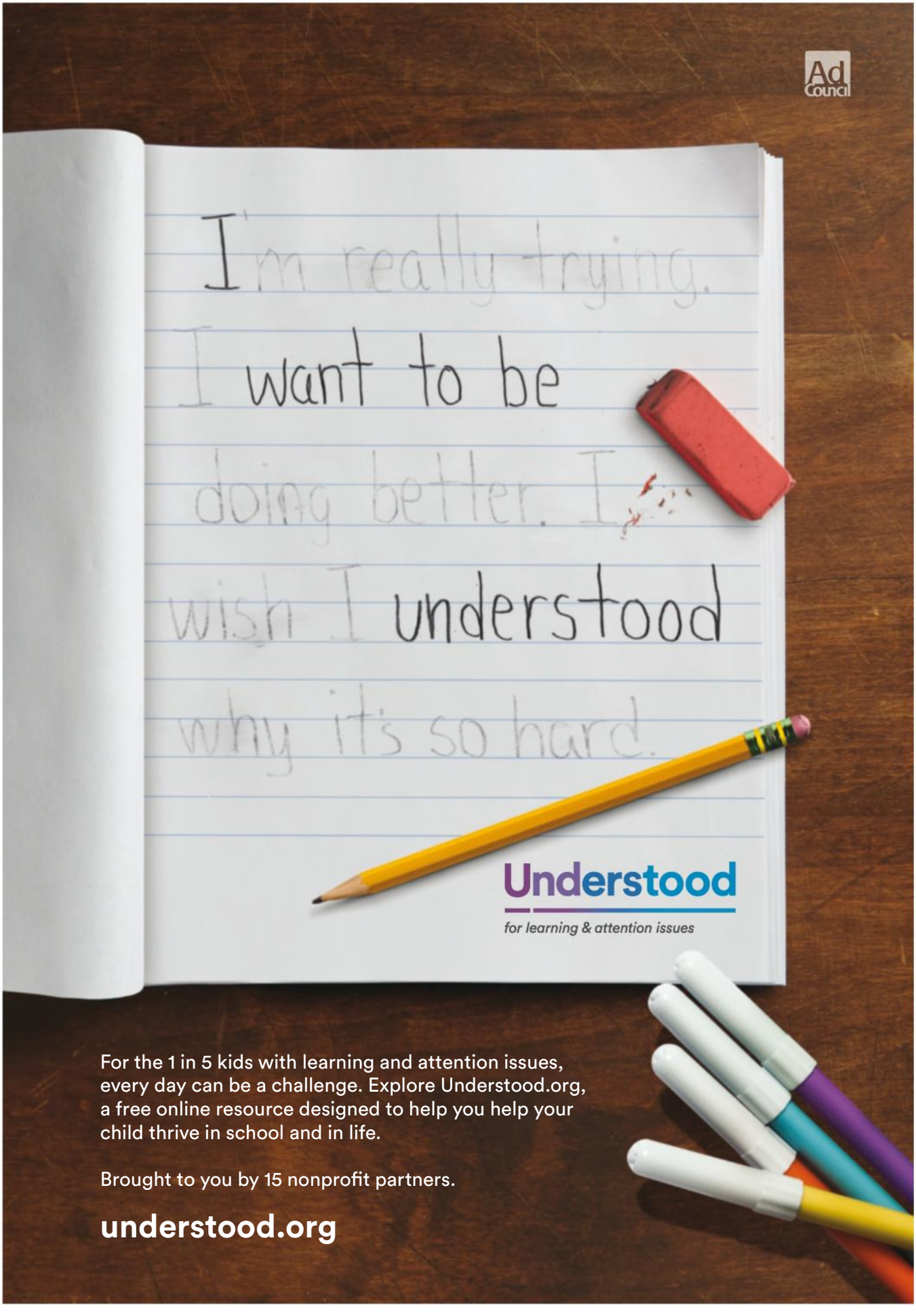
SO IF YOU REALLY WANT TO MAKE AN IMPACT, you should figure out how to hack texts. Or Snapchat. That's where the real power is—or will be.

But never mind, as that would do nothing for the save-my-BlackBerry campaign. If you persist in believing that email matters and that hacking email is the best way to do a little realpolitik, then I propose we persuade your spies to hack into my email. It's a win-win. We will both make news, and my BlackBerry will once again become valuable, this time not as a perfect device for the flat-keyboard-challenged but as an item of vital national-security importance.

Or we both wait until emailing and BlackBerrys come back into fashion, in another 20 years or so. Last month my 18-year-old asked if he could have my old turntable, and the other day I caught him listening to Hall and Oates. And so I know it's just a matter of time before he's going to find an email from me, actually read it and maybe even hit Reply.

Van Ogtrop is the editor of Real Simple

ILLUSTRATION BY TOMASZ WALENTA FOR TIME; PANTS, PHONE: GETTY IMAGES


Ad Council
I'm really trying. I want to be doing better. I wish I understood why it's so hard.
Understood
for learning & attention issues
For the 1 in 5 kids with learning and attention issues, every day can be a challenge. Explore Understood.org, a free online resource designed to help you help your child thrive in school and in life.
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Colson Whitehead The author of *The Underground Railroad,* Oprah's new book-club pick, talks about making fiction from history's great atrocity

How did this story come to you? I was thinking how, when you're a kid, you think the Underground Railroad is a literal railroad. It was the year 2000. I was finishing up *John Henry Days*. I didn't feel like doing another research-heavy book. Slavery is such a huge topic—I didn't feel up for it emotionally. Every couple of years I would go back to the idea and look at my page of notes and maybe add a line.

How did you go about researching it? Mostly slave narratives. The Works Progress Administration in the 1930s interviewed former slaves—80-year-olds, 90-year-olds who were kids at the time of slavery. There are hundreds and hundreds of these accounts. I got a lot of the atmosphere and small details, what they ate, what the cabins were like. The WPA stuff is all digitized, and I could download it to my iPad. Oprah was like, "Do you have any research materials?" And I was like, "Just on my iPad, sorry!"

There are many atrocities that Cora endures, some of which involve what she's forced to watch. It felt very resonant with contemporary conversations about bearing witness to the vulnerability of the black body. I want to testify for generations of Africans who came here. And my own ancestors. When people ask, "Is this influenced by Ferguson or Black Lives Matter?" No, I'd had the idea for a while. I think we have these periodic eruptions where we actually are thinking about race in a different way. And then it passes, until the next eruption. But I did want to talk about how world fairs would exhibit black people as jungle natives. I did want to bring in the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, which not enough people know about. Cora is a way of producing a witness to all these different things.

For readers who are looking to your work to help them better understand the problem of race in America, what would you point them to? You know, slavery's not very far away. It does echo through time, and we are feeling its reverberations still. Bill O'Reilly was mad when Michelle Obama mentioned that she lives in a White House built by slaves. Why would you get mad at that? He felt he had to step up and say, Actually, that is technically true, but they were well fed and housed. I'm not here to tell people about slavery and how terrible it was. But if the way I handle different periods of American history and black history does illuminate the way we live now in a way that's useful, I'm glad.

In *Sag Harbor,* you talk about the paradox in the world's eyes of "black boys with beach houses." You were one of those boys. Does that sense of paradox linger? It was never a paradox for me. I think the world and our concept of race change by degrees. It's not weird to my daughter that we have a black President. If we're lucky, to my son, who's 3, it won't be weird that there's a female President.

> 'Slavery's not very far away. We are feeling its reverberations still.'

You were the winner of a MacArthur "genius" grant at a young age. Did it feel like a gift or a burden? It was great. Obviously *genius* is in quotes and ironic. But I didn't have a lot of money. It allowed me to put a down payment on a house. It enabled me to be confident enough to think, Oh, maybe I can start having a family because we're not going to be starving for five years. And also, it gave me license—you're on the right path, keep doing it.

How did you feel about the news that Harriet Tubman will be on the $20 bill? I was really glad. Who would be mad that Harriet Tubman would be on the currency? I don't understand. There are no women. You're getting mad about one woman? —RADHIKA JONES

ERIK TANNER FOR TIME

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